The Mystery of the Third Parrot

by

Marvin Dana

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He stiffened to a new horror

The Mystery of the Third Parrot

Relates how a mystery that baffled the New York City police gave an eminent psychologist an opportunity to test his skill

By MARVIN DANA
Author of *The Lake Mystery*

CHICAGO
A. C. McCLURG & CO.
1924

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1924

Published April, 1924

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Printed in the United States of America

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CHAPTER I

THE MAN ON THE "L"

DOCTOR CARNEY regarded with lively interest the man seated immediately in front of him on the elevated train. The attention of the eminent psychologist had been arrested by an abrupt, violent shuddering movement of the fellow's shoulders, neck and head. His first thought had been that here was an epileptic about to have a fit. But the tremor ceased as swiftly as it had begun, and it was not repeated. There remained, however, a visible rigidity, which provoked Carney's curiosity. He was impressed by the fact that here before him was presented something directly in his own particular line of study—an emotional state of extraordinary tensity. It seemed evident, too, that the stress of feeling thus expressed by the body was wholly due to an internal source, since there was no apparent cause of excitement from without. The train was lumbering placidly uptown; now, between stations, the few persons in the car were quiet, staring vaguely at the dull

panorama of upper-story windows, or glumly scanning the comics of evening papers.

Doctor Carney felt his professional skill as a psychologist baffled in this instance, since he could not even guess a cause for the stranger's emotional mood. Vanity was piqued by inability to form any reasonable surmise in explanation of the case thus unexpectedly presented for examination. His absorption was such that he quite forgot the explicit instructions of the physician whom he had just visited. The medical authority, who was also a personal friend of his patient, had spoken plainly:

"You have been under too great a strain. This course of lectures at the university has worn you out. You need complete rest. Go away for a time, and forget that there is such a thing as psychology. Don't think of emotions or mental processes, not even your own."

"But what shall I do, then?" the psychologist had demanded.

"Anything that requires no thought," the physician had answered. He regarded his bachelor friend quizzically. "You might fall in love."

But Carney shook his head.

"No, for I should certainly try to analyze both my feelings and those of the unfortunate woman."

"And that would be fatal," the physician asserted. "But, seriously, you must try for a time

to lose interest in human beings; you must give up trying to take them apart in order to see how they work. Forget your own inner processes as well. Get into the country, and climb mountains, swim, ride—in short, live for a season in your physical sensation, not in your mental."

Carney nodded in understanding.

"The lectures came to an end today," he said. "I'll turn myself loose in the wilderness somewhere, and for a few months try living like an animal, so far as I can manage it."

"And remember," the physician warned again, "don't permit yourself a thought about human emotions, either yours or another's."

"I'll be as beastly as possible," the psychologist promised with a rueful grin.

Now, hardly fifteen minutes after leaving the physician's office, Carney was thrilling over the problem presented by the man seated in front of him. His mind was eagerly seeking any plausible explanation for the stranger's conduct. Indeed, one not a psychologist might well have been absorbed in the spectacle offered by the fellow's behavior. As the train rumbled on, the man turned little by little toward the window, as if moved by an irresistible force against all the power of his will. In the course of seconds, he had turned so far that the watcher behind him had a profile view of his face.

Carney, at the sight, felt his curiosity stimulated to new zeal. For the face was as that of one stricken. The features were distorted, yet held moveless under the thrall of a dominant emotion. Nevertheless, Carney felt himself powerless to interpret justly the significance of that rigid, tortured face. There was anguish in the expression, so much was obvious. But there was much more than anguish. Surely, rage was manifest, for the upper lip was lifted in a snarl. And, yes, expectancy. Carney saw that the dilated eye stared fixedly, with something horrible in its scrutiny, at the flitting line of windows bordering on the track. Suddenly, a nervous convulsion racked the man's form. The lifted eyelid drooped, until only a slit showed the pupil blazing, as the head was bent forward spasmodically, as if toward a closer view of something horrible and mysterious out there beyond the window pane. In the same instant, the jaws were clamped together, and, even above the clamor of the car trucks, Carney could hear the furious grinding of the teeth. Carney could not hear any sound of words as the man's lips writhed, but he knew that the muttering was of curses, since only curses could harmonize with the ferocity of the man's face in that moment.

An instant longer so; then, somehow, there came a change. Now, despair was subtly shown, a suggestion of terror, a hint of the conscience-

stricken, as the eyelid fluttered, the jaws unclenched. The rigidity fell from the features, the whole form sagged, the face turned from the window.

It was evident that the crisis of the man's mood had passed. The psychologist still found himself completely at a loss for any possible explanation. Even during the time when he held his gaze steadfastly on the contorted face before him, he had included within his vision the shifting scene beyond the window. But there had been nothing startling in that vista, surely nothing to terrify, or to infuriate. On the contrary, there had been nothing save the rows of windows, vulgar and sordid, uniformly placid. As the train slowed for the next station, Doctor Carney closed his eyes in an effort to visualize the memory concerning that bleak procession of windows stalking past. Not one had offered aught that seemed in any way remarkable. There had been no trace of anything dreadful, not even of anything in the least bizarre. There was not a detail sufficiently distinctive to stand forth in his recollection. Stay! There flashed a solitary vivid bit of coloring in the drab panorama. It had been a parrot fluttering on a window ledge. The memory of it stirred Carney to a new wonder. For the knowledge was borne in on him that the window in which that parrot flaunted itself had been directly opposite at the very crisis of the

stranger's mood. Moreover, it seemed to the psychologist in some vague way that there had been a touch of strangeness about that bird of brilliant plumage. But his memory sought in vain for any explanation of this impression.

As the train jolted on its way, Carney opened his eyes for another look at the cause of all this mystery. The seat before him was empty. A glance about the car failed to discover the man. It was evident that the fellow had left the train at the station just passed. Doctor Carney sighed dejectedly. The incident was closed. The mystery of it all must forever remain a mystery.

Thus Carney assured himself. But, though he deemed the incident closed, it still dominated his thoughts. The mystery occupied his consciousness to the exclusion of all else, as he left the train at Eighty-sixth Street, and went to his apartment on Central Park West. It maintained an aggressive control of his mood still when he was comfortably seated in his living-room, puffing a pipe, and gazing unseeingly over the green expanse of the Park. He continued heedless of the physician's counsel. Indeed, he had quite forgotten himself in concentration on the curious happening of the afternoon.

The psychologist was primarily a thinking machine. His body was below the average in stature, frail almost to the point of attenuation. The head,

however, was disproportionately large, with the looming forehead of extraordinary intellect. The thinning brown hair lay lankly beyond the exposed temples. The face was thin, the skin itself clear, with a touch of hectic color on the cheek bones. He wore a mustache clipped short, at which from time to time he gnawed futilely through force of old habit. The nose was thin and slightly hooked —questing, not predatory. The eyes bulged a little, and this effect was emphasized by the thick bifocal lenses of the spectacles which he always wore. The eyes were clear, gray, brilliant indices of the restless mentality at the back of them. Left in possession of a modest fortune by the death of his parents while he was still in the university, the young man had chosen the life of a student, and for nearly a score of years had devoted himself especially to psychology, until he was recognized as an authority in this field. He had worked hard and unremittingly: he had achieved much. He especially prided himself on the coldly logical exactness of his mental attitudes. He had delved into occultism, he was familiar with the claims of telepathy, clairvoyance and spiritualistic phenomena, but he held himself resolutely aloof from any credulousness. He refused to accept as fact anything not capable of scientific demonstration. Such restraint often taxed his will severely, for he was by nature impulsive, prone to impetuous action

under the spur of feeling. He had, however, made it a rule to dissect his own emotional states, and by the understanding of them to bring them under the control of reason. A favorite theory of his was that the essential oneness of man's nature enabled him to discern within himself all the vagaries of human emotion. Thus, by a sort of dual consciousness, he was able by analysis of himself to learn with exactness. By understanding himself, he understood others. Such introspection, alas! is always dangerous, and it had at last wrought its ill effects on Carney to such an extent that his appetite had come to be a flimsy fraud, and his intermittent sleep a procession of nightmares. Hence his visit to the physician, who had prescribed the brainless activities of a sportive animal. And behold the prescription already forgotten, as the psychologist huddled in his easy chair, blinking blindly at the verdant reaches of the Park, while his thoughts raced in search for any shred of explanation concerning the curious behavior of the stranger in the train.

Of a sudden, the tumult in Carney's mind was stilled. In place of confusion came an absolute calm. It was, for a few moments, as if his mind were wholly empty, with no thought whatever present in consciousness. Then, in another instant, an idea flashed there, an idea that was a conviction of truth. The psychologist considered

is conviction with amazement, almost with awe, uite unable to doubt its verity. It seemed to him n the instant of illumination that the mystery was revealed: The stranger in the train was a criminal, tortured by emotions due to looking again on the scene of his crime.

After a brief interval during which he passively accepted the truth of this idea, Carney aroused himself to examination of his own mental state. He analyzed and reasoned concerning his conviction, and, much to his relief, analysis and reason afforded justification. He was certain that such solution of the mystery was by no means a haphazard fancy, not merely a theory which was the product of strained imagining, but instead a plausible, logical explanation of all the facts known to him. He believed that the apparently vagrant mental activities had at last crystallized into the truth. And when he had finally determined the worth of the idea, Doctor Carney found himself suddenly beset by an impulse. This impulse was to test the truth of his conviction by a visit to the scene of possible crime. To be sure, the psychologist prided himself on an orderly habit of life, in his various external activities as well as in his mental. He was wont to discipline himself against impulsive actions as wasters of energy. So, at the outset, he resisted this impulse. But it was one not easily denied; it clamored for expression.

The doctor felt his will against it weakening moment by moment. Moreover, to support it, there came to him a thought of his own familiar teaching: that the repression of so strong an impulse was a dangerous thing, an offense against that harmony of body and soul which is the very essence of health. In the end, then, Carney justified the impulse, even as he had justified the conviction. He sprang out of his chair, clapped on his hat, left the apartment, and set off for the elevated station, stepping far more briskly than for many a day. He was at peace within himself. Had he not justified this extraordinary performance by deliberate reasoning? As a matter of fact, the learned doctor had suddenly grown intensely human: he was all eagerness, led by a lively and tantalizing curiosity, off on an absurd questing into a mystery perhaps wholly of his own creation, into a crime that probably existed only in his own imagination.

Carney left the elevated train at Fourteenth Street, which was the station where the stranger had vanished. He descended the stairs to the street, and walked down the west side of Ninth Avenue, with the intention of picking out, if possible, the window on the opposite side of the street at which he had seen the parrot. He was sure that the building on which his interest centered must be situated about midway of the block. He

realized, however, that the elevated structure itself cut off his view of the upper stories, and he was compelled reluctantly to cross the street, where he sought to escape attention by walking at an average pace, with his head bowed, except for an occasional swift, roving glance upward. He experienced a definite pang of apprehension as he passed a policeman at a corner. He felt himself vaguely identified with crime, an accomplice after the fact. It was a comfort to him to recall his friendship with Deputy Commissioner Maxwell, a boyhood chum, whose interest in psycho-criminological tests had brought him into contact with Carney frequently in recent years. The psychologist determined then and there that, should he find anything in this hunt, he would straightway tell the whole tale to the police official. But, first of all, there must be the concrete evidence of a crime to justify a story so extravagant. Carney raised his eyes aloft yet once again. His gaze was caught and held by a fluttering of color high above. He stopped short and stared fixedly, forgetful of possible observers. It was perhaps fortunate that the street was for the moment nearly deserted, so that none noticed his action.

No mistake was possible. A moment of scrutiny sufficed to show that the parrot still moved restlessly to and fro on the sill of the topmost window in the house next beyond where Car-

ney was standing. His eyes ran over the front of the building, and found nothing remarkable. There was a tawdry shop on the ground floor. On one side of this stood an open door giving on a stairway. The psychologist allowed himself no time for hesitation, but marched resolutely into the hallway, and ascended the stairs, stepping firmly, with no attempt at stealth. He advanced up one flight, and then another, and finally a third, going briskly, no longer apprehensive or doubtful. As he reached the top floor, and faced toward the front of the house, he saw before him two closed doors, evidently opening on the two rooms into which the front was divided. At the stairhead, however, Carney abruptly halted as his ears were assailed by the noise issuing from the closed room on the left. The listener was at first confused by the din, which he could not understand. Then, presently, he became aware that the medley of raucous cries and shrieks came from parrots—certainly a number of them. The bird on the window sill was not the only one of its kind in the mysterious chamber.

Carney still hesitated for a moment to find a pretext by which to excuse his intrusion, should there be an occupant of the room. He decided that it would be sufficient to inquire for a mythical Charlie Jones who had once lived at this address. Thus fortified, the psychologist went forward de-

terminedly, and knocked smartly on the closed door. The hubbub of the birds ceased for a few seconds, then broke forth afresh, with a new vigor of unintelligible guttural squawkings. There was no other answer. Carney rapped again, and waited. Then, since no response came, he beat a third time on the panels with loud insistence. When this demand for admission remained unanswered, he tried the door. There was no resistance, the door swung open at his touch, and he stood for a moment confused in the doorway, his eyes blinking at the bright light of the room after the dusk of the hallway, his ears deafened by the screaming of the parrots. The small room was revealed clearly by the light from the single window. On the sill, the parrot which had been visible from without was still fluttering, but Carney gave it only a glance, for his attention was drawn to the other birds, which were shut in cages hung at either side of the window. They kept up a nerve-racking din — articulation of a sort, as the listener guessed, though it sounded like a meaningless gibberish to his unaccustomed ears. He saw at first glance that the furnishings of the room were of the shabbiest, limited to bare necessity. There was a rumpled bed provided with frayed blankets, lacking sheets. A wobbly chest of drawers stood against the wall to the left of the window, facing the bed, with a cheap looking-

glass fastened above it. A light stand against the wall at the left end of the room supported pitcher and bowl. In the free space between the door and window, a deal chair lay overturned. Just beyond it, a bird cage, with the door open, rested on the floor. It was evident that the parrot on the window sill had escaped from the cage. Carney looked more attentively at the third parrot, which scrambled awkwardly back and forth along the window-ledge, but made no effort to fly out, although the lower half of the window stood open. And now, at last, the psychologist found his attention absorbed by this third parrot. It seemed to him that through all the vocal uproar of the other birds, which went on unremittingly, the parrot at the window remained wholly silent — or almost so. Carney thought that he could detect a few hoarse croakings, but he could not be sure. Then, as he peered intently, he perceived the fact: The tongue of the parrot had been cut out. It had been done recently, for the wounded stump showed raw and bloody within the gaping beak. The psychologist experienced a slight shudder of repulsion at sight of this mutilation. Instinctively he turned his eyes away. They rested on the space to the right of the window, which lay in shadow. He stiffened to a new horror. Crumpled on the floor there lay the form of a man. It needed only a glance at the upturned face to know

that the man was dead. A second glance showed the cause of death, for a knife was thrust to the hilt in the man's left breast. . . . . Doctor Carney had found the crime for which he searched.

CHAPTER II

A TERRIBLE DISCOVERY

IT WAS thus that the eminent psychologist, John Preston Carney, holder of many degrees and justly esteemed by the learned world, arrived at adventure. The life of the student hitherto had been a sheltered one, almost cloistered. He had studied, and he had taught, but his routine of living had moved within quiet scholastic circles. His emotional experiences had been of a vicarious sort. He had never labored under the stress of business conflicts, had never known physical struggle. His knowledge of life's activities of a passionate sort were rather academic than personal. A disillusioning love-affair of university days had left him with a very definite hostility toward any further romantic entanglement for himself. Crime had been to him a theoretical source of certain human emotions of psychological interest. It was a thing of vague reality with which he had had no personal contact, nor could have — until now.

And now, in the twinkling of an eye, all this was changed. The little man stood gnawing fiercely at the bristles of his mustache, staring with distended eyes at the visible evidence of crime.

The dead body sprawled on the floor was a reality not to be denied. Here, indeed, was murder. The fact admitted of no doubt, for the force with which the mortal blow had been struck precluded the idea of suicide, as did the additional fact that the blade had been driven through the man's buttoned coat. No, this was not suicide; murder had been done within the squalid room, probably without a witness, except for the three birds. Carney, regarding the blackened blood that had dried on the breast of the dead man, judged that the deed must be at least a day old. The corpse had lain there for a period of many hours, without having been discovered, in spite of the fact that the door was unlocked. The appearance of the chamber indicated that its tenant himself gave it such little care as it required. This might explain the fact that no servant had gained knowledge of the tragedy. Probably, too, the noise of the parrots could be heard only faintly by other tenants in the building when the door was closed, and it was too familiar a sound to attract particular attention. As Carney thought of this, he felt a sudden perturbation lest the chattering of the birds just now should provoke curiosity on the part of some hearer, for he had left the door standing ajar. The idea aroused him from the state of stupefied immobility in which he had remained through many minutes. A terror of being found

there alone with the corpse of the murdered unknown seized him. It was as if he himself were somehow guilty, an accomplice after the fact. He turned quickly and pushed the door shut.

The action helped the psychologist to resume his accustomed poise, to think again with his usual clarity. At the passing of the first mood of horror, there came a curious reaction that was almost like exultation. The little touches of hectic color high on his cheeks became more vivid; the gray eyes fairly sparkled behind the lenses; the nervous nibbling at the mustache ceased. A certain pride in his achievement caused him to straighten his shoulders, to hold his head a little higher. His analysis of the mood dominating the stranger on the train had been proven accurate. His own skill as a psychologist had been triumphantly demonstrated. The result of shrewd mental processes had been a clarification of his intelligence such that he had perceived the truth, had realized the precise significance of what he had observed, had understood the fact of a crime committed. Out of that understanding had sprung the impulse to track down the crime. It was from his obedience to this masterful impulse that he found himself here in the presence of the dead. The feeling of personal pride in his achievement thus far steadied Carney's nerves, and brought him self-confidence in the gruesome situation. He set himself delib-

erately to a study of the scene, in the hope of discovering any clues that might help to bring about a solution of the tragedy. He was aware that the law forbade any disturbance of the body except by duly constituted authority, but there was nothing to hinder his scrutiny of the setting for the crime. Yet, as his eyes roved the dingy room, the psychologist realized that there was little, if anything, in the surroundings to throw light on the cause of murder. Indeed, there was nothing visible to aid imagination. No garments hung on the row of hooks in the wall back of the bed. It needed only a glance about to show no trunk, or valise, or box, and there was no closet. It was evident that the occupant had domiciled himself in the place without so much as a change of clothing. A broken bit of comb and a fragment of soap rested on the washstand, along with a crumpled and grimy towel. It seemed that the tenant had had no baggage beyond the three parrots in their cages. Of these, the two that remained in restraint still clamored unintelligibly, and the third, free on the window sill, still fluttered to and fro, its beak gaping in dumb effort to rival the cries of its fellows. Somehow, the frantic movement to and fro of the third parrot and the spasmodic opening of the beak, within which appeared the mutilated remnant of tongue, produced an uncanny effect on the observer. The bird's dumbness

was more dreadful than the ceaseless gutturals of the others. It was with a feeling of relief that the Doctor shifted his gaze from the parrot to the body of the murdered man.

As his eyes moved from the window to the corner, they caught sight for the first time of the victim's cap, which was lying on the threadbare carpet beyond the head of the corpse. It was of cloth, having a turned-up brim, without visor. The headpiece had a faded, nondescript air, but it was unmistakably foreign. Following the direction of his thoughts, Carney turned his attention again to the body on the floor, and a look at the face convinced him that the man had been a foreigner, probably of Slavic blood. This was indicated by the snub nose with widely flaring nostrils and the high cheekbones. A suggestion of the Tartar was given by the eye-sockets slightly uptilted at the outer corners, but the eyes themselves, which stared with ghastly steadfastness at the cracked ceiling of the room, were blue. The remainder of the face was masked by a heavy beard, black and bristling. The hair of the head, too, was thick and straight, and grew low on the forehead. The body lay flat on its back, with arms outflung. The tips of the ears showed beneath the rumpled hair, and in the lobe of each was a plain gold ring, such as sailors of a former generation so often wore. The coat and trousers were of a cheap dark cloth, much

worn. Coarse woolen stockings showed above the heavy shoes. Where the sleeves of both coat and shirt were pushed up on the right wrist, the marks of tattooing were visible, and from this, in connection with the testimony of the earrings, Carney was sure that the man had been a sailor. Then, finally, the psychologist overcame a natural reluctance, and fastened his gaze on the breast of the corpse, where the seeping blood from the wound had spread a rusty discoloration over the coat front, in the midst of which stood out the handle of the knife. This hilt, as Carney judged, was between four and five inches in length. It was of some hard black wood, deeply grooved throughout its length to insure a firm grip to the hand of a wielder, and with a knob at the top and another at the base, from which the blade extended. This lower knob was sunk in the cloth of the coat from the force with which the fatal blow had been delivered. The blade itself was invisible, hidden within the flesh which it had violated and done to death. Carney was able to make out that the workmanship on the handle of this knife had been of a rude sort. The grooving was done unevenly, evidently wrought not by an artisan, but by one who fashioned a weapon for his own use. Certainly, Carney mused, a knife thus distinctive must afford a clue to the perpetrator of the crime.

There sounded a light tapping on the door.

Carney faced about, then stood motionless in sudden fear. It was suddenly brought home to his consciousness that his own situation was of a compromising sort. It would be difficult to explain his presence there with the body of a murdered man. His account concerning an extraordinary interest in the emotions of the stranger on the elevated train, concerning subsequent analysis and concerning a strong impulse driving him to this particular place—the detailed account would indeed sound too fantastic for credence by any ordinary hearer. Too late, Carney regretted his tarrying on the scene of crime. He realized that he should not have delayed here, but should rather have hastened away to notify the proper authorities. He could have visited his friend, the deputy commissioner, could have told the story to the official without embarrassment. Now, it was too late: discovery was at hand. The knocking on the door was repeated, a little more loudly, more insistently. Then, while the Doctor still remained motionless and silent in frightened doubtfulness as to his course of conduct, the knob was turned, and the door opened gently. On the threshold stood a woman—a girl rather, for the slender grace of the form and the delicate freshness on the face belonged to the early twenties. Carney stared blankly at the apparition, held dumb not only by his own predicament, but also by stark amazement

at the incongruous aspect of the newcomer. For the girl did not harmonize with this environment. There was nothing tawdry or coarse about her, such as might have been expected of a visitor here. On the contrary, she was unmistakably a lady, one of birth and breeding. The fact was witnessed not only by the smart cut of the tailored suit she wore and the trig hat, but by the proud poise of the body, the haughty carriage of the head, by the level gaze of the blue eyes that rested inquiringly on Doctor Carney's face. The girl's lips moved as if she were about to voice a question. Even in his perturbation, the psychologist noted with a little thrill the delicate beauty of her mouth. But the words of interrogation were not uttered. It seemed as if, suddenly, the evil spell of the place touched her spirits. She shuddered, and her eyes left the Doctor's face, passed beyond him to the sprawled figure on the floor. They dilated as they fell on the upturned face of the dead man. In the next instant, a strangled cry broke from her. The blood flowed out of her face; she drooped slowly; then, before the startled psychologist could stir to aid her, she toppled to one side and lay unconscious.

CHAPTER III

A STRANGE PREDICAMENT

THE need for secrecy directed Carney's first instinctive action. He stepped forward hastily, and pushed shut the door, which in closing barely swung clear of the girl's prone form. Then he looked down at the white face, and for a few moments stared helplessly, feeling himself impotent in the face of such catastrophe. A panicky impulse of flight beat upon his consciousness, but he resisted it. To leave the stricken girl alone in this evil place was a thing impossible to a nature both kindly and chivalrous. Yet, he was completely at a loss as to what course he should pursue in circumstances so dangerous. To call for help must result in that publicity which he was most anxious to avoid—not only for his own sake now, but also for the sake of the girl. He could not doubt that, whatever had been the cause of her coming to the scene of tragedy, she was innocent of any complicity in the crime itself. A single glance at her face was sufficient to know her purity. At last, however, Carney's confusion quieted, and he began to think more clearly. It occurred to him that the only safe procedure

would be in restoring the girl to consciousness and afterward in assisting her to escape unobserved from the premises. He went to the washstand, where a little water remained in the pitcher. Carney soaked his handkerchief in this, and, returning to the girl, knelt by her, and bathed her forehead. Leaving the wet cloth across the brow, he chafed the wrists and hands, one after the other. Even in this time of anxiety, he noted with keen appreciation the exquisite formation of these hands with the delicate tapering fingers. They were the perfectly kept and unblemished hands of one who had never toiled. They were, indeed, so exceptionally beautiful that the Doctor marveled at them, and felt almost as if he were profaning this loveliness by the brisk rubbing with his own coarse palms. Presently, he exhaled a sigh, partly of relief, partly of apprehension as to what might next befall, for the girl's white lids lifted slowly, and the blue eyes looked up steadfastly into the face bent over hers. It seemed, at the outset, that consciousness returned slowly, without memory of the shock that had struck her down. Her gaze was calm, untroubled. It was evident that she received an impression of confidence in this stranger who ministered to her. She spoke faintly, with a note of appeal in her voice:

"What is it? What has happened? I do not understand."

Doctor Carney let go the girl's hand, took the handkerchief from her forehead and replaced it in his pocket, as he answered soothingly:

"You were a bit overcome for a moment. You will be all right very soon. Just rest quietly a little longer, and I'll help you to get home."

The serenity vanished from the girl's expression. Confusion succeeded, next alarm. Fear sounded in her voice when she spoke again.

"I set out to visit Andrieff. I came to the house, to the number that had been given me. The street door was open." Her voice faltered in the telling, as if she groped blindly in a memory that escaped her. "I went up a flight of stairs, and another, and another. I knew that the room of Andrieff was at the top in front. I reached the door, I knocked. Yes, I knocked—there was no answer. I tried the door; it was not locked: I opened it. I stepped forward, and looked about. I saw a man standing there, who looked at me without speaking. There was something strange about the way he looked at me. Somehow, it made me afraid, though not of him. But I felt something—horrible. Ah!" Full memory surged back. The final exclamation was a gasp of terror. Again, the eyelids fluttered and fell. The girl had fainted for the second time.

Doctor Carney heaved a sigh that was half of exasperation, but he was no longer flustered. He

took the handkerchief from his pocket, and redampened it in the pitcher with a methodical precision that usually characterized his actions as well as his mental processes. He repeated his bathing of the girl's forehead, and afterward renewed his chafing of her wrists and hands. He was impressed anew with the loveliness of these fingers, tipped with rosy nails that were bordered with delicate transparent cuticle never coarsened by the scissors of a manicurist. Then, while he still rubbed briskly, the psychologist studied the face of the girl. Now that the eyes were closed, he could give critical attention to the other features, and he found them almost flawless, with their regularity of contour emphasized by the complexion of creamy white. The adjective occurred to him as especially appropriate because, through the pallor of her swoon shone a faint golden radiance. The hue of the skin seemed to reflect in some slight degree the tints of the blond hair which was wholly golden. Carney felt himself fascinated by the beauty of the young woman, and again he began to wonder as to the influence that had brought one of her type to a place so incongruous, to the scene of murder. But his speculations were interrupted by a flutter of the girl's eyelids, which warned of returning consciousness. He laid her hands down, and, at the slight movement of his body in so doing, jabs of pains in his knees reminded him that

the floor was hard—hard for her, too, he reflected. Thereupon, he slipped off his coat, rolled it, and, gently lifting the girl's head, slipped the garment underneath to serve as a pillow. As he finished, and remained kneeling and looking down at her, her eyes opened. She gazed at him for a few moments blankly, then memory crashed upon her. Her pupils dilated, then dulled under a film of fear. She raised her hands, and clapped them over her face as if to shut out the dreadful vision. Her lips moved. Carney bent lower, but the words were meaningless to him, of a language strange to his ears. He desired to soothe her distress, but knew not how. "There, there," he murmured, and repeated the word again and again as to a child. He felt the futility of his effort, but could contrive nothing better. Yet, his monotonous crooning had its effect. The insistence of the sound penetrated to the girl's consciousness and made her aware of the man's presence, so that presently she put down her hands, and regarded him intently from eyes in which terror still lurked. Her gaze was inquisitorial, though in no way suspicious. Evidently, she had no distrust of this stranger whose kindliness was apparent in both his acts and his expression; she did not deem him guilty of any part in the tragedy. Her glance went for a moment from Carney to the birds jabbering in their cages, and afterward to the third parrot

fluttering on the window sill. She seemed to listen to the cries of the caged two, then shook her head as if to stop her ears against the noise, and her eyes fastened again on the face of the psychologist.

"Andrieff is dead," she said softly in English that was perfect, though perhaps overly precise in pronunciation. There was a little catch in her voice as she went on speaking: "He has been killed. It was done by the Bolsheviki. You are not of them—no!"

"No," Carney agreed hastily, "I am not of them." And he added, rather absurdly: "I am not a Russian—not even a parlor socialist."

"No," the girl repeated musingly, "you are not of them. You do not kill and rob. I think you are a good man."

"At least, I do not live a life of crime," the psychologist asserted, somewhat embarrassed by the girl's naïve pronouncement as to his goodness. He made a little backward gesture with his head. "That was Andrieff?"

The girl shuddered, but answered bravely enough:

"Yes, that was Andrieff. He was our servant—mine now, for I am the only one left. He had our trust, and he deserved it. He has been killed because he would not betray it. I have lost wealth, since of course they would have robbed him. He died in defense of his duty. I have lost

more than jewels. I have lost a faithful servant."

Abruptly, a change came over her expression. She raised herself to a sitting position on the floor, and regarded Carney with new curiosity. Under her survey the Doctor felt his embarrassment increase, and he scrambled awkwardly to his feet, but her eyes did not leave his face as she addressed him again. The childlike, intimate note was gone from her voice: she spoke with the half-insolent air of a personage who condescends to question an obtrusive inferior. "But who are you, sir? What is your business with Andrieff, living or dead? Are you, by any chance, of the police?"

Carney shook his head vigorously. He was anxious to disassociate himself from the scorn in her voice as she pronounced the word "police." But it occurred to him that anything apologetic in his manner, or indeed any attempt at explanation on his part just now, might well provoke suspicion, especially since the bald facts in a truthful narrative would be likely to strain credulity. It would be better, he thought, to assert himself as if his conduct needed no excuse, better to assume a masterful air as if there could be no question as to the propriety of his motives or actions. So, he continued briskly: "No, I have no connection with the police, no official standing whatsoever. My connection with this sad affair has come about solely through a curious combination of circum-

stances, which I shall explain to you at another time. At present, the need is to get you away from this place, to your own home. I shall be glad to escort you, to help you in every way possible. Do you think that you could stand up now with my assistance?"

The girl nodded. She accepted unhesitatingly the temporary domination of this stranger. Aided by Carney, she got to her feet, and stood waiting a little shakily, with a supporting hand against the wall, while the psychologist picked up his coat and put it on. He retrieved also his handkerchief, which had fallen to the floor when the girl first sat up. But, as he stepped to the girl's side, and placed his hand under her arm, preparatory to leaving the room, the two of them were startled by the sound of quick steps in the passageway outside. They halted at the door, and a brisk knock followed. The two within the room looked at each other in dismay. The psychologist experienced again the feeling of panic; the little flush that had come into the girl's cheeks faded out, and her eyes widened in fright. Neither stirred or spoke. It was the thought of both that their only hope of escape from painful entanglement in the tragedy lay in silence. It was possible that the visitor, receiving no answer to his knock, might go away in the belief that the room was empty.

The knocking was repeated. The man and the

girl, motionless, held their breath in suspense. The person outside beat for a third time on the panels, more loudly now, peremptorily. A gasp issued from the parted lips of the girl as she saw the knob of the door turning. The psychologist, too, saw and with difficulty stifled a groan. Both realized that their escape undetected was no longer possible: they were fairly caught in the trap of tragedy. Then, at last, the door was swung wide, and a man loomed in the opening. Doctor Carney had time to note that this stranger was tall, broad-shouldered, unburdened by superfluous flesh, and that the face was young and attractive, graced with an expression of lively intelligence. The grey eyes were shining with excitement, and the man's emotion thrilled in his voice, as he now spoke with restraint, in an evident effort to hold the tones steady:

"I have found you!"

Before the brief phrase was ended, the girl had slipped free from Carney's hold, had cast herself within the ready arms of the man, who held her closely to him, and stared over her head challengingly at the psychologist.

CHAPTER IV

AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS

IN self-defense, against the accusation in the young man's eyes, Carney stared back defiantly. The situation had swiftly developed a feeling of hostility between the two, which was increased on the part of the psychologist by a vague consciousness of having been deserted by the girl, who had fled from him to the protection of the stranger. He knew that this was natural enough, since he himself was unknown to her, while the other man was an acquaintance at least, if not something nearer and dearer. He condemned his chagrin as absurd in the circumstances, but he felt it none the less.

A diversion came through a fresh outburst of noise from the caged parrots. The young man's gaze shifted from the psychologist to the birds, and he scowled in manifest annoyance at the din. Then his eyes were caught by the fluttering movement to and fro of the third parrot on the window sill.

"Why," he exclaimed, after a moment, "that fellow is dumb. He's had his tongue cut out. There's only a raw stump left." He glanced again

at Carney. "Is that some of your work?" he demanded.

The psychologist answered quietly and with dignity:

"I am not a mutilator of animals. I am not even an assassin." He moved a little to one side, so that he no longer stood between the newcomer and the dead man lying on the floor.

The action was so significant that the young man's gaze was attracted at once to the gruesome object. His face whitened a little as he beheld the corpse, saw, too, the handle of the knife standing out above the breast in mute witness of the crime. As he looked intently, a sudden emotion contorted his features, and his lips opened as if he would speak. But he choked back the words, his lips drawn close in a determined line. Since he made no comment, after a brief interval, the older man spoke again:

"Murder has been done here as you can see. The victim, I understand from this young lady, is known to her as Andrieff. The condition of the blood that has oozed from the wound shows that the crime was committed hours ago. I myself arrived here, just before the coming of the young lady."

The young man spoke, with suspicion in his voice:

"Why did you come?"

"I shall explain everything to you both," the psychologist said briskly. "But this is neither the time nor the place. Our first duty is to help this young lady home; our second, to notify the authorities of the murder."

"Yes," the girl agreed, "I wish to go. It is too dreadful here. Besides, there is nothing here now for me: Andrieff is gone, for he is dead; and the jewels are gone—that was the reason he was killed. Yes, let us go." While speaking the girl had withdrawn from the young man's supporting arms, and she now stood drooping a little, but firmly enough.

At mention of the jewels, Carney felt a new thrill of interest, since here was introduced a motive for the crime. He deemed it discreet to make no comment, but his thoughts were busy. The young man, however, immediately became active. He went to the body, knelt beside it, and ran his hands over it. His action moved the coat a little, and thus brought into view a small leather-bound book lying on the floor close to the right hand of the corpse. The searcher did not touch it. This could not be the repository of a treasure in jewels. But at sight of the volume the girl spoke, with a note of sadness in her voice:

"It is Andrieff's *Book of the Gospels*. He was always reading it."

"There is nothing else here," the young man

announced, getting to his feet. He made a round of the room in rapid search. The work was brief, since there was only the single drawer of the wash-stand as a receptacle. The thin, hard mattress, which he examined, permitted no concealment of a bulky parcel. The threadbare carpet likewise could hide nothing, nor could the cages of the birds, and there was no other possible hiding place. It was plain that the jewels, if such were ever here in this unlikely spot, had been carried off.

"Nothing anywhere here," the young man said at last, with a conviction shared by both his hearers. He returned to the girl's side, and took her arm. "Let us go," he said.

The three went out of the room silently, and Carney, coming behind the other two closed the door of the chamber softly with a sigh of relief. There was no one about as they went along the passageway, and descended the first flight of stairs. But as they came to the head of the second flight, a door at the back opened, and a slatternly woman looked out. She seemed to recognize the young man, for she peered at him closely, and addressed him with the easy familiarity of her sort:

"My, the Rooshan would have had a party, if he'd been home. But I know he wasn't. He hain't come in today. I can tell because he stamps so in them heavy boots of his'n. Nor he didn't come in last night. He hain't been here since you

called yistiddy, Mister."

The three had halted before the woman's garrulous outburst. At her concluding words, the young man's face took on an expression of bewilderment.

"You are making a mistake—I was not here yesterday; in fact, never before in my life." He made the denial emphatically.

The girl started violently, and looked up at the speaker with a puzzled expression. But the face of the frowsy woman hardened, and her next words came viciously:

"I don't know your game, Mister, but I do know you're a dirty liar." With that explicit comment, she went back into her room, and slammed the door shut.

The three went on their way silently, and reached the street without any other encounter. They moved slowly southward, looking for an empty cab, which presently appeared.

"I shall take the elevated," Carney explained as the other two got in. "As soon as I get home, I shall telephone full information to a friend of mine, Deputy Commissioner Maxwell. It is a little late for introduction," he continued whimsically. "However, I am Doctor Carney," and he added his address.

"The psychologist!" the young man exclaimed, and a sudden friendliness softened his features.

"I have read some of your books. They are splendid." The older man warmed visibly under the praise.

"I am glad you found them of interest," he said. Then his face grew serious again. "And now for your part of the introductions."

"This young lady is Miss Vera Daniloff, a young lady who has only recently reached here after a flight from Russia. I myself am Edward Farnham, an architect. But I shall see you soon again. Now, the first need is to get Miss Daniloff home. The address is 9 A West Eleventh Street."

Carney repeated the address to the chauffeur, then lifted his hat in salutation as the cab moved away. And in that same moment there came to his ears in the clear tones of the Russian girl her words to Edward Farnham:

"Why did you say that to the woman? You were there yesterday—I myself saw you and spoke to you."

The words rang in Carney's consciousness as he hurried on his way to the elevated station, and they remained as a problem during the journey northward and the walk across to his apartment. But, try as he would, he could find no satisfactory explanation. It seemed evident from the Russian girl's words that this young man, Farnham, had, in fact, lied to the woman who had

accosted him in the hallway. Why? The girl's question to him and her statement had been in the nature of an accusation. It was not to be doubted that the two were well acquainted; it was highly improbable that there could have been any mistake on her part as to his identity, and she had declared positively that she both saw him and spoke to him the preceding day at the house where the murder had occurred. So, Carney felt himself convinced that the young architect had indeed uttered a falsehood when he denied to the woman lodger in the house his former visit to the place. Why had Farnham made this denial? The untruth created a presumption of guiltiness. Yet, Carney was unable to regard this new acquaintance as the possible murderer; he could not even associate him indirectly with the crime. Cold reason decreed that he should view Farnham with suspicion, but logic was powerless against a warm liking that had developed in him toward this companion in the tragical adventure. Again, impulse held sway over the psychologist. He liked Farnham instinctively; he believed him innocent. For the second time that day Doctor Carney surrendered himself to the leading of what he felt was an intuition of truth — an intuitive perception superior to those powers of ratiocination on which hitherto he had so prided himself, a perception not to be distorted by mere circumstances.

Thus, with a surprising self-satisfaction from this new triumph over that despotic sway of reason to which he had so long been subject, Carney entered his apartment and went to the telephone, where he called up Maxwell at Police Headquarters. To that astonished official, he gave a brief outline of his activities during the afternoon.

"But what took you there?" The deputy commissioner demanded.

"Just an impulse," was the answer, "but an impulse fortified and justified by precise reasoning along psychological lines."

"Fortified and justified!" Maxwell spluttered. "Any desk sergeant would put you in a cell for that, and the judge would keep you there." The official went on speaking very seriously. "To tell you the truth, John, your story sounds fishy—so extremely fishy, in fact, that I am inclined to believe it. Anyhow, the poorest sort of a liar could concoct something more plausible. Besides, I know that you are mildly crazy. I ought to send a man after you on the jump, and have you jailed as a material witness, with a possible charge of murder to follow. For old friendship's sake, however, I'll be remiss for the present in the discharge of my duty, on condition that you come straight down here to headquarters. This is, according to your own account, a murder case. Therefore, it requires more than a casual chat

over the telephone to straighten it out."

"But—" Carney would have protested.

The voice of the deputy commissioner interrupted crisply, the tones charged with authority:

"Please, come at once, John." The click that came over the wire indicated that the command was final.

Carney, in his turn, hung up the receiver glumly. He realized suddenly that his adventuring into crime was not to be, so to speak, all beer and skittles. Hitherto, throughout the afternoon, he had been carried along buoyantly by excitement, and the experience, in spite of its gruesome features, had been pleasurable rather than otherwise. It had projected into his somewhat drab existence, as a thinking machine, a vivid color of emotion, which was none the less thrilling because that color was the crimson of crime. Now, however, he was confronted with prosaic, perhaps painful, consequences. He had no relish for personal publicity of this sort, only a violent distaste for being involved in police and court proceedings. He was not alarmed over the prospect of terror to himself in connection with the crime, but he was dismayed at the possibility of being made to appear ridiculous in the eyes of the world for the whim that had carried him to the scene of tragedy. He sighed heavily as he set forth once again. His sole consolation lay in the fact that Maxwell was

his friend. The deputy commissioner would believe his statement however much it might tax the credulity of police sergeant or judge; and the authority of that official would be exerted in his behalf—exerted so strongly, Carney dared hope, that, after all, this innocent excursion into crime might not prove a catastrophe.

The event justified his hope, at least for the time being. In the session at headquarters, he related painstakingly every detail of the affair. His friend was not oppressive, but he was thorough in quizzing. At times, too, the official forgot friendliness, and fell into the blustering police manner. Carney resented this, but held himself in restraint by strong effort of will, and the badgering was not long continued. Naturally, Maxwell was eager to learn everything possible concerning the man in the elevated train whose display of emotion had set the psychologist in quest of the crime. Carney's assertion that this must have been the assassin was received by Maxwell without comment. But that the accusation was at least tolerated became clear from the official's later questioning.

"Would you know the man if you were to see him again?"

"Of course," Carney declared. "The fellow made a profound impression on me, and I studied him intently. I should recognize him again instantly."

"Describe him," Maxwell commanded.

"Why, he was—" The psychologist halted in confusion. He found himself at a loss as to just how to begin his description. Maxwell eyed his friend sourly.

"Tall, short; fat, lean; blond, swarthy; white, black; American, foreigner—tell me something, anything!" he barked.

"He was dark, with black eyes," Carney announced, clutching at a straw of recollection.

"Whiskers?"

"Smooth-shaven."

"Nose?"

"He had a snub nose, with flaring nostrils. I distinctly noted how they quivered with the play of his emotions."

"Gold in his teeth?"

Carney shook his head.

"I didn't see—I only heard him grinding them."

"That helps of course," Maxwell remarked with heavy sarcasm. "Now, what about his clothes—what sort of a hat?"

"I think it was a soft black hat," the psychologist ventured doubtfully.

"You don't know?"

"I looked at his face," was the apologetic response.

"His clothes, then?"

"I have an impression that they were dark, but the impression is vague."

"I believe you," the deputy commissioner snapped, with a snort of disapproval. Then he continued more gently: "Now, tell me, John, wasn't there anything distinctive about this chap—anything that I could send out in a description to the police that would help them to identify him? Did he have a cauliflower ear, or a broken nose, or a scar on anywhere visible? I can't set the force to nab anybody they may hear grinding his teeth. Rack your memory, John. Wasn't there something?"

Carney was silent for a few seconds as if ransacking recollections, but the apparent effort was only a sham. He felt himself guiltily conscious of the fact that he could not name a single distinctive feature of the man whom he believed to be a murderer. At last, he shook his head in confession of inability.

"But I'd know him again if I saw him," he repeated stoutly.

"Go home, John," the deputy commissioner directed. "But don't leave the city. Your end of it promises little. I have hopes of better results from that architect and the Russian girl."

Carney remembered that he had failed to mention the words he had heard spoken by Miss Daniloff to Farnham in the taxicab. He felt again his

own guiltiness at the omission, but he made no effort to correct it, and went on his way somewhat crestfallen over his poor showing thus far in the investigation, yet still secretly elated over this most unexpected and startling contact with crime.

CHAPTER V

THE GIRL TELLS HER STORY

THE influence of Maxwell was exerted in behalf of Doctor Carney to such an extent that he was subjected to little inconvenience at the hands of the police authorities in connection with the murder of Andrieff Fomin. The psychologist was duly questioned by various officials, but it was evident that he was not suspected of any participation in the crime itself. This was partly due to the attitude of the deputy commissioner toward him, but, too, his extraordinary narrative was credited in a spirit of tolerance. It was easy for the prosaic police mind to accept as possible, even probable, vagaries of conduct on the part of a psychologist that would have been scoffed at on the part of an ordinary citizen. Indeed, Carney himself became aware that the officials of the department with whom he was brought into contact regarded him, in some degree at least, with good-natured contempt. They classed him as a "highbrow" whose head was in the clouds — clouds which, in fact, had penetrated until their vapors overlay his wits. He squirmed over the ignominy of being thus ranked as merely foolish by these

incompetent judges. He comforted himself to some extent by the reflection that the facts had justified his erratic behavior since he had actually trailed the crime.

It seemed, in truth, that the investigation by the police could do little toward solving the mystery of the murder, and bringing the assassin to justice. The testimony of the Russian girl, Vera Daniloff, supplied a motive, but failed wholly in any hint as to the identity of the criminal. She was carefully questioned, but her testimony contained no information of value, except a description of the jewels. Farnham, also, was interrogated, but his evidence contributed nothing of importance. Throughout the proceedings, Carney maintained silence as to what he had overheard said by Miss Daniloff to Farnham in the cab. Moreover, he said nothing concerning the declaration of the woman tenant in the Ninth Avenue house that Farnham had visited the premises on the day preceding the discovery of the murder. The psychologist realized how damning this evidence against the architect must appear, and he suppressed it in obedience to an impulsive belief in the young man's innocence. A like reticence was maintained by both the Russian girl and Farnham himself.

The accidental association of the three with the crime of itself established at once a certain in-

timacy of relationship. Their common interest in one another on this account was augmented on the part of each by a spontaneous liking for the others, a mutual confidence and sympathy, which tended to establish friendship. On the day following the first meeting, Carney was again touched by impulse, to which he yielded without the slightest effort at logical justification. So, he journeyed down to Eleventh Street to call on Miss Daniloff, whom he found at home in a tiny and somewhat bare apartment, under the chaperonage of a stolid old Russian woman. This servant and duenna spoke no English, but she was efficient, for she ushered the visitor into the parlor, muttered gutturally, and left him to await the coming of her mistress.

The psychologist looked about him with curiosity, ready to heed any significant impression. At the outset, he received a thrill that was almost a shock. For his ears were assailed by the jargon grown familiar in that squalid room where he had come on the corpse of the slain man. The two noisy parrots hung in their cages on either side of the single window, and he presently perceived on the opposite wall the third cage, in which was the mutilated parrot. The sight of it held the observer's attention in a sort of horrid fascination. The creature was dumb, but it seemed always striving to voice its cry, perhaps of despair, perhaps of

hate, perhaps of accusation. The beak gaped widely to show the root from which the tongue had been lopped. Suddenly, there flashed on the psychologist the thought that the ruthless hand which had severed the bird's tongue had likewise plunged the knife into the heart of the bird's master. And after this thought followed another, a keen wonder: Why?

If the assassin had indeed troubled thus to silence the squawking of a bird, it must have been for some momentous reason, other than a mere nervousness over noise. Besides, there was the fact that the other parrots, vociferous as they were, had suffered no hurt. Was it that this third parrot spoke phrases fraught with significance? Did the assassin fear betrayal by the parrot's gabbling? Or was some other vital concern threatened by the bird's tongue? It might be that the work of mutilation had been carried out by some person other than the murderer — perhaps by Andrieff himself before he was struck down. Carney's brain whirled in a maze of confused speculations. He felt an impulse to credit the final fancy, that Andrieff himself had inflicted dumbness on his pet. But why? The sound of the opening door interrupted his thoughts. He turned to find Vera Daniloff advancing toward him, smiling, her hand outstretched.

There was a cordial handclasp between the

two and friendly greeting. Each felt an instinctive liking for the other, and the extraordinary circumstances of their previous meeting naturally established between them a relationship, which, at the outset, was of a sort more intimate than would have been possible had they encountered each other in conventional surroundings. At once, after greeting her guest, the Russian girl silenced the two clamoring parrots by covering the cages. Then she seated herself, and motioned Carney to an opposite chair. In answer to his question, she explained that the police authorities had granted her request for possession of the birds, since no relative of the murdered man had appeared to claim his meager possessions.

"I greatly wish also to have the *Book of the Gospels,* which was there by Andrieff in that awful place. But the officers said that it must be retained by them during the investigation. I should like it as a souvenir of Andrieff. It will probably be given to me bye and bye."

"I don't see," Carney commented, "how the *Gospels* can be of use in solving the mystery of this crime, any more than the parrots themselves."

Vera shrugged her shoulders, and the expressive blue eyes widened a little as if in disdain.

"But there is not a mystery," she declared. "The fact concerning the killing of Andrieff is very simple."

"You mean, he was slain in order to get possession of your jewels."

"Exactly. And there is little chance of finding this thief and assassin. I do not believe he will be discovered nor do the police."

"If it would not be too painful to you," the psychologist suggested, "I should like very much to know the story—your own story, I mean, that led at last to this tragedy."

The girl threw out her hands in a wide gesture, and when she spoke again after a little pause, her voice had hardened. Her precise English was crisp, facile, but always slightly stilted after the manner of speech for which the training has been tedious and exact.

"It is a story in which there is now no novelty for us Russians. My family was well-to-do, even wealthy. The property was seized or destroyed by the revolutionists. All the members of my family except myself were put to death. My old nurse, herself a peasant, was able to hide me. It was she, too, who was able to carry our jewels out of the house before it was burned. My father had brought them from the bank some weeks before, meaning to take them with him out of the country. Andrieff was nurse's brother. When I was concealed in their cottage, it was unavoidable, of course, that Andrieff should know of my presence there. But there was no danger in this, for he

was loyal to the family. He had gone as a sailor while still only a boy, and had spent most of his life at sea. But, between voyages, he often came back to see his sister, of whom he was very fond. It may be that his long periods of absence prevented him from being fully sympathetic with the feeling of the revolutionists. At the first outbreak in our country, nurse told me that Andrieff said he cared nothing as to who might rule the land. But he was a gentle and kindly man, in spite of his rough life, and he was sickened by the red ruthlessness of the Bolsheviki. He came to hate them for their bloodthirstiness, their savage slaughter of the helpless. So, he was eager to help me against them in any way that he could, both for his sister's sake and for my own.

"Nurse had her savings, enough to pay our way out of the country. I fled with her in disguise as her niece. But it was deemed safer to leave the jewels with Andrieff, for him to carry to America, where we were to meet. There was not money enough to pay for the journeying of all three, so he was to make his way to a port, and there secure a berth as sailor, and eventually reach New York harbor. Nurse and I reached Switzerland—the journey was a nightmare of horror. Then nurse fell ill and died. I buried her there, and still had enough money, and a little more, to get to New York. I crossed the ocean in the steerage. A

cousin of nurse's lived here, and I carried the address. I found her, and, as she was alone, she was glad to share these rooms with me.

"But I did not go to her first after reaching New York. Instead, I visited the post office, for Andrieff, if he succeeded in reaching here, was to send me word addressed *Poste Restante.*"

"The General Delivery," Carney interpreted, to fill a little pause in her narrative on the part of the girl.

Vera nodded assent, and went on speaking:

"I called there every day, month after month, in vain. Then, at last, there was a letter. Andrieff had escaped to this country. But he warned me that enemies were on his trail, and that he must use every precaution to escape being trailed by them. He gave me an address, however, and set a time for me to go to the place."

"The address was that of the house where we met?" Carney questioned.

"Yes," Vera replied.

"And the day of your visit was the time set by Andrieff, of course."

But the girl shook her head.

"No," she answered. "The time set by him was the preceding day."

Carney was greatly astonished, and he expressed his feelings frankly.

"Why did you delay, even for a day? I should

think, after all those months of waiting, you would have been prompt."

The delicate, slightly pale face of Vera flushed, and the clear blue eyes drooped before the open curiosity with which the psychologist regarded her. For the first time her speech was faltering.

"But I did hasten—indeed, I did," she asserted. "I went to the house the day before, but I did not see Andrieff. I saw—" She broke off in confusion. Suddenly, recollection flashed on Carney. He remembered the girl's words to Farnham in the cab. It was obvious enough that she had encountered him on the occasion of her first visit to the house. Her next remark set him to wondering anew. "Anyhow, I was informed that Andrieff was away that day, so I did not go to his room. I returned home, and went again the next day, as you know."

Carney discreetly withheld comment. It seemed plain that the girl had encountered the architect at the Ninth Avenue house, and that the young man had been her informant as to the absence of Andrieff. The fact became of peculiar significance in view of Farnham's positive denial of his presence, which he had made in response to the slatternly woman's claim of recognition. The psychologist realized that here was evidence to justify the worst suspicion against the young man, and he realized as well that to offset such sus-

picion he had only his liking, quite unsupported by reason.

The doctor's train of thought was abruptly interrupted by Vera. The traces of confusion had passed from the girl's manner, and she exclaimed with a lightness that seemed genuine enough, as if she had relegated serious concerns to the background for the time being:

"But enough of that, Doctor Carney, for, in very truth, I have spilled an earful."

"Eh?" queried the psychologist dazedly. Where before he had been astonished, he was now astounded. The unheralded shift from refined speech to a vulgarism struck him like a blow. "You said——?"

"I said that I had spilled an earful," Vera repeated, and there was pride in her voice. "You have heard the expression, is it not so?"

"I have heard it—yes," Carney admitted, without enthusiasm.

"It is an idiotism," the girl continued. "I have learned it quite recently."

The psychologist's knowledge of French helped him.

"*Idiotisme.* That is the French word, but the English equivalent is idiom."

The Russian accepted the correction, gratefully.

"Thank you, my dear Doctor. Such mistakes are easy to me, since French is familiar and

English is strange. My speech in your tongue is stiff. So it is that I am anxious to improve it by using phrases I hear in going about your city. Now, 'spill an earful' is so American, so what you call snappy—it is not?"

"Perhaps it is," Carney conceded. He was minded to suggest caution in this matter of adopting the slang of the moment, but the girl went on speaking before he had decided how to begin his admonition.

"I am very eager to acquire fluency in English. I am so hampered at present. It is as if I were a dumb woman. Ah, you should hear me in Russian. Then I am able to talk freely, to voice every thought without restraint. That is much nicer. I am a woman, and no woman likes a fetter on her tongue."

"But your English is admirable," came the protest.

The girl shrugged her shoulders, and the beautiful hands moved in a gesture of rejection.

"You should hear me in Russian," she insisted. "It is then that I am really myself."

The psychologist shook his head as if in refusal to credit her assertion. But within the minute he was to have proof that she had spoken the truth.

CHAPTER VI

WHAT THE PARROTS SAID

THE door opened, and a man entered the room. Carney had just time to notice that the newcomer was slender, of medium height, with a smooth-shaven mobile face, when his attention was distracted by the conduct of Vera. And now he began to appreciate what she had so recently told him, for the girl was transformed on the instant of this visitor's appearance. She sprang to her feet, and her face was flushed and radiant as she advanced with outstretched hands, while she fairly babbled greetings in her native tongue. Her eyes had deepened, had become more lustrous; her lips were curved tenderly in a smiling happiness. There was a vivid joyousness in the movements of the lithe form, in the tones of the voice. The woman who had suffered was gone: in her stead was a girl, care-free, merry, all vivacity. As the newcomer held her hands in his, and spoke briskly whenever she gave him opportunity, she showed herself tremulously, daintily eager with the happy abandon of a child. Yet, for all her absorption in the coming of this guest, she did not forget her manners nor Carney. She

interrupted herself after a moment to turn toward the psychologist.

"This," she explained, "is my friend, Boris Goshkoff, Doctor Carney. He has been kind to me here. More, he is a Russian! Now, I speak my own language for a minute, if you will excuse me." She turned again to her compatriot, who, having bowed courteously to Carney, again listened attentively to the girl's lively speech. The two seated themselves on a couch, and maintained an animated conversation, which the psychologist could not understand so far as the words were concerned, though it made clear to him what Vera had said of herself. She was, indeed, wholly different from what she had seemed only a few seconds ago when talking English. Though he had failed to perceive it at the time, she had been constrained by the less familiar tongue. Now, she was free. She was able to express herself unhindered. But, beyond this liberty, there was, the Doctor knew, a deeper cause for her mood. This Russian brought with him a native atmosphere, remembrance of former gladness, a souvenir of home, that was like wine in the blood of this girl who had been so stricken by fate, who found herself alone and desolate in a strange land.

Then, as he continued watching the two, Carney began to wonder if perhaps a third cause contributed to the girl's emotional state. Was she

influenced to some extent, perhaps even chiefly, by a feeling more subtle and more dominant even than that of affection for home and the speech of her home land? Did love stirring in her heart set this maiden thus a-thrill with life? Was it rapture in the presence of a lover that so glowed in her eyes, that so fashioned the lips to exquisite smiles, that so sounded of music in the rapid modulations of her voice? Reason insisted that this simple explanation was the right one. Nevertheless, the psychologist found himself hesitating to accept it. It occurred to him that this Russian girl was of a type hitherto unknown to him, a type temperamentally versatile beyond any he had known—more exotic. He had an impulse to reject love as a factor in her conduct, to credit her enthusiasm in this fellow's presence to the relief it offered from nostalgia, from the homesickness that lay heavy on her. Carney remembered, too, how trustingly the girl had gone into the arms of Farnham at the time of their meetings in the chamber of Andrieff. He was inclined to believe that the girl's love was actually given to the architect. Still, reason reminded him that women are fickle. His thoughts spun disorderly, until Vera turned presently, and again addressed him:

"Boris here is an actor," she explained in English. She was still voluble and excited, though more staid than she had been a moment before

when using her native tongue. "Of course, he has temperament; he is most sensitive. Now he tells me that he is afflicted by the presence of this third parrot—poor thing! It cannot disturb his ears, since it is dumb, but it is offensive to his eyes." Her gesture indicated the mutilated bird in the uncovered cage.

The man smiled whimsically, and in his turn addressed Carney in flawless English. His voice was gentle and musical, very resonant. His black eyes shone good-naturedly, and the flexible lips were smiling. The psychologist felt himself agreeably interested in the fellow. A certain restraint that had held him hitherto vanished before the other's geniality and charming manner. Indeed, Carney experienced a sort of fascination in watching the play of changing expressions, which was manifested not only in the pliant lines of the face, but also in the eyes, in the tones of the disciplined voice, in the carefully controlled gesticulation.

"That parrot is a bird of ill omen," Goshkoff declared. "To be sure, it is mute, but—" he shuddered—"every time that tongueless beak gapes open it shrieks of blood and death. The noise of the other two parrots at their worst is dreadful enough in all conscience, yet it is as nothing to the silence of this other."

There was, perhaps, something artificial, something theatrical, in the words. Yet back of them,

as it seemed to his hearers, was genuine feeling. And the consummate art in the method of utterance, in pitch and stress and inflection, carried conviction. The girl whitened a little, as if she looked again into that room where Andrieff lay dead. Carney himself recalled with repugnance his first sight of that beak, bloody and gaping. His eyes went to the cage, and they were held there for a little by an attraction difficult to explain. The parrot presented a morbid spectacle. It appeared, in fact, a symbol somehow of the crime committed in its presence. It, too, had suffered; in some unknown fashion it had been involved in the mystery of Andrieff's death; in a lesser way, it had been a victim. Again, Carney found himself wondering why. What could have been the bird's share in the tragedy? Whose was the hand that had thus ruthlessly left the bird voiceless? Had the act been merely one of wanton cruelty, or had there been underlying it a motive significant and sinister? The psychologist felt a rush within him of strong desire to know the truth. It was with an effort that he at last tore his eyes from the parrot, and compelled himself to listen to the conversation of his companions.

"I cannot sympathize with your wish to have these creatures near you," Goshkoff was saying. "They reek of crime; they smell of blood." He spoke with an intensity that made Vera cower.

"Do not say such things!" she protested vehemently.

"But since they are true— It may even be that these two—" his gesture indicated the draped cages by the window—"talk of death, of murder most foul. What do they say, Vera Ivanitzka?" A subtle intensity in the speaker's tone, as he asked the question, caught Carney's attention. He spoke impulsively:

"I heard them—in that room; their noise was just gibberish, just the cluckings and squawkings of birds. There was no speech, nothing articulate."

Vera, recovering in an instant from her sombre mood, laughed outright.

"Fie! my dear Doctor Carney, and for shame! It is not polite of you to speak thus of our beloved Russian language. Cluckings and squawkings, forsooth—no articulate speech—oh, dear! Was that what you were thinking as you listened to the conversation between Boris and me just now?"

Carney experienced a sensation of mild embarrassment, but his curiosity overcame it.

"Do you mean to tell me," he demanded, "that those parrots can talk, that they were actually talking Russian when I heard them?"

Vera nodded.

"Naturally, they do not speak the elegant elocution of Boris, but they surely talk Russian—a

very little. One of them repeats my name quite distinctly, Vera Ivanitzka, and the other repeats the name of Andrieff. They have a few words besides, not many."

"I am greatly surprised," Carney admitted. "It is evident that my hearing is bad in Russian. Were they, then, old pets of Andrieff's? He had them in Russia?"

"No," the girl answered. "There were no parrots at the cottage. But Andrieff was a sailor, you know, and sailors have a partiality for such creatures. He must have picked them up somewhere while voyaging to this country. Probably, he would have taught them more phrases."

"What is it that they say," the actor asked, "besides the names?"

"It is rather curious," Vera answered. "It is only occasionally that they call out the names, but one of them constantly cries '*S' ikonee,*' and the other says, '*Sto tridtsat dva arshina.*'"

Goshkoff showed no interest in the phrases, but Carney was eager to learn the meaning of the words.

"What is the English translation?" was his quick inquiry.

"'*S' ikonee,*'" the girl interpreted, "signifies, '*from the icon.*'"

"An icon," the psychologist remarked rather doubtfully, "is a sacred picture; it hangs on the

wall in every Russian home and is a sort of shrine."

"As you see," the girl said softly, and she pointed to the far end of the room. Carney's gaze went in the direction indicated, and he saw against the wall an exquisitely painted scene of the crucifixion. It was framed in heavy gold, delicately chased and ornamented with precious stones.

"I carried it hidden on me through all that frightful journey," Vera said reverently. "It was like a shield to me." In her tone sounded the sincerity of a living faith. It was only when, after a few moments, the girl stirred as if arousing from reverie that Carney ventured to question her again:

"And what is it the other parrot keeps repeating?"

"It is merely nonsense: '*Sto tridtsat dva arshina,*' means, '*one hundred and thirty-two yards.*'"

The psychologist knitted his brows in puzzled thought over the two phrases during the little silence that followed. The words, "from the icon," and "one hundred and thirty-two yards" offered nothing that seemed helpful toward solving the mystery of Andrieff's death. Carney realized that in a vague way, almost subconsciously, he had hoped that some clue to the assassin might be found in the reiterated mouthings of the birds. It

was evident now that no assistance was to be had from this source. The oft-spoken phrases could have no relation to the crime. There had been no icon on the wall of that bare chamber in which Andrieff was done to death. Nor had there been any distance within those walls of one hundred and thirty-two yards. Yet, somehow, this very failure to discover any significance in the speech of the parrots seemed to emphasize the mystery that lay in the mutilation of the other bird. Why had any one wished thus brutally to silence the third parrot? Could it have been the act of a man made frantic by the harsh cries? That seemed unlikely, since the other birds were left untouched, to continue their screechings. Had the mutilation been merely the wanton cruelty of a madman? And the answer must be no again, since the cunning of the insane would disdain an act so motiveless. Moreover, there was always the question as to the identity of the perpetrator. Was the doer of the deed Andrieff or another? Carney could not believe that the dead Russian had acted thus. The man had not been a maniac: he had been simply a stolid Russian peasant. He had been, too, a friend of parrots, rather than their foe. He had loved and tended the birds. It was inconceivable that he should have been guilty in this matter. It was reasonable to believe, Carney concluded, that someone other than Andrieff

had sheared off the tongue of the hapless bird, and that there had been some strong impelling cause. He could hazard no guess as to the nature of that cause, but he felt a rush of conviction now, not only that such a cause existed, but also that in the discovery of it there would be found some vital revelation concerning the slaying of Andrieff. Carney got to his feet abruptly, and made his farewells to his hostess and her other guest. He wished to be alone in order to mull over all the possibilities that might present themselves to his mind during a period of concentrated thought. He had for his consideration two questions:

Who had rendered the third parrot dumb?

Why?

And a third question rang loudly in his brain, to which, he knew, he could find no answer:

What had been the words spoken by the third parrot?—words so meaningful that they must not be repeated!

CHAPTER VII

THE ARCHITECT SPEAKS

CARNEY'S thoughts during the evening that followed, which he spent quietly at home, were a medley out of which nothing of definite value issued. He carefully scrutinized all of his knowledge as to the facts of Andrieff's murder, but he was unable anywhere to find a suggestion of means whereby the slayer might be identified. He was forced to the conclusion that the only hope of securing the criminal lay in the remote chance of another encounter on his part with the stranger whom he had watched in the elevated train. The conviction was firm in the mind of the psychologist that this had been the guilty man. He had no doubt whatever that he would instantly recognize the face were it ever again to be presented before him. Unfortunately, a second meeting was a possibility so remote as to offer no comfort to his desire of solving the mystery.

Carney devoted much time to futile musings on the phrases repeated by the parrots. He was much impressed by the discovery that what he had taken for meaningless cries on the part of the birds were actually intelligible words in the Russian

language. The translations given him by Vera held chief place in his reflections for a long time. He realized that the two phrases when taken together made an excellent start toward a statement of possible importance. "From the icon one hundred and thirty-two yards," or, in the reverse form, "One hundred and thirty-two yards from the icon,"—these words sounded like a simple and sensible direction of some sort. It was evident, however, that the statement was incomplete. The two phrases suggested a third—to follow the measure of distance: "From the icon one hundred and thirty-two yards" to— Had there, indeed, been such a third phrase? Instantly, then, as the thought formulated in his mind, recollection fairly flamed—recollection of the third parrot, with bloody beak where the tongue had been slashed off at the roots. Once again, Carney experienced the swift, irresistible rush of conviction. He felt that he had no need to reason, since he knew. That third parrot had possessed a form of words, which it cried over and over, a form of words that completed the phrases of its fellow birds. There remained the speech of the unharmed parrots: "From the icon one hundred and thirty-two yards;" there was lost, and lost hopelessly, as it seemed, the phrase spoken by the other bird.

It was still early in the evening when the psy-

chologist determined to give up further consideration of the problem for the time being, and to go to bed. He felt a little sheepish over the strength of his conviction concerning the third parrot, since it was due hardly at all to reason, rather to an impulse toward belief; it was intuitive, not the result of logical processes. Because he had always prided himself on a rationalistic habit of mind, Carney regarded his mood with a trace of suspicion, albeit also with a trace of pride. "Reason is only a makeshift means for attaining knowledge," he reflected, "always liable to error from ignorance of essential facts. Absolute knowledge, the intuitive perception, is vastly superior. The trouble is that what seems intuitive may be in reality the result of reasoning concerning which one is not conscious." The psychologist fully intended to follow this line of thought for some time, but his plan was thwarted by the heavy sleep that seized him the moment his head touched the pillow—sleep deep, restful, dreamless, such as he had not known for many a month.

It was soon after breakfast the next morning that Carney was surprised by the advent of Farnham. The unexpected visitor excused himself for the intrusion, speaking with a constraint that rendered gloomy his usual frank and pleasant expression.

"I have ventured to call on you, Dr. Carney,"

he explained, as he seated himself in a chair offered by his host, "because conventionalities seem of little importance when men have met in circumstances such as those that first brought us together."

"I am glad you have come," the psychologist answered simply. "The fact that we met as we did is indeed sufficient reason for foregoing subsequent thought of formality. Besides, I am very glad to see you. For that matter, I had been thinking seriously of calling on you."

Farnham sighed with relief. Now that the ice was broken, the constraint of his expression passed, and a smile lightened the gravity of his features, though that smile was grave.

"I am sure," he remarked meditatively, "that your interest in this case of the murder of Andrieff is an unusual one. It seems inevitable that it should be so, since you were led in such an extraordinary way to the discovery of the crime. If you will permit me to compliment you, Doctor Carney, I wish to say that your action was a wonderful illustration of ability to observe with exactness and to reason from what you observed correctly and swiftly. I doubt that any other person could have performed the feat."

But Carney shook his head.

"There was something else to it," he declared almost testily. "It wasn't just a matter of rea-

soning. You must remember, young man—" he gnawed at the bristles of his mustache for a few seconds—"you must remember that there on the elevated train I was within the zone of a tremendous emotional disturbance. Knowledge came to me directly, and its source was the assassin himself. I was made sensitive somehow by the peculiar situation, by the things I observed, which rendered me receptive to the conviction that came to me. My reasoning on the matter then and afterward served only to justify that conviction."

"You're a bit beyond me," the listener admitted, with a puzzled look. "Of course, it's your line, and you are probably right. Anyhow, the important thing to me is that you believe this stranger to be guilty." He hesitated for a few moments, while his host regarded him curiously, and then continued in a tone almost defiant. "In view of all you have learned since, do you believe that the stranger on the elevated train was actually the murderer of Andrieff?"

"Yes," was the uncompromising answer. "If I ever see that man again, I shall denounce him as the assassin. I haven't the shadow of a doubt as to his guilt."

"There would have to be other evidence against him beyond your accusation."

"It would be brought to light, once the fellow was identified."

"There is the difficulty," the architect objected. "Even if chance were to do the unlikely thing, and bring you again face to face with that man, you would not recognize him."

Carney snorted indignantly.

"I would recognize him anywhere, in any circumstances, at a glance," he asserted stoutly. His tone rang with conviction. But Farnham was not convinced.

"From your own account, this man on the train was in a state of intense emotion during all the time that he was under your observation. The variety and the force of his feelings were constantly registered in the play of his features. His expression continually shifted: it showed horror, gloating—other extreme emotions. Is it not so?"

Carney dumbly nodded assent. There was apprehension in the gaze of the clear bulbous eyes behind the heavy lenses as they studied his visitor.

"So," Farnham went on, "the fact is that you have never seen the fellow's face in repose. The significance of that fact is vital, because you could not recognize him again. An expressive face of the mobile sort you have described is unrecognizable under the stress of such powerful emotions, and the reverse is equally true. The fact is illustrated in the case of any great emotional actor. A study of a series of photographs shows how

great are the changes. You see, Doctor Carney, this matter is one in which I can speak as a sort of expert. I am not an actor, but I am a painter. I am an architect by profession but a painter by avocation. I am fond of doing portraits, and what I have just told you is a fact out of the portrait-painter's primer."

The psychologist nodded somewhat dolefully in assent to Farnham's statement.

"It may be that you are justified in what you say. It is a matter that I have never investigated, but your declaration is plausible, to say the least. You believe that I could meet the fellow face to face, could talk to him even, without recognizing him?"

"Yes—you did not hear his voice."

"No, confound it all!" Carney spluttered. "I only saw him rolling his eyes like a hen with the pip. I guess you're right, but there must be some way of tracing him." He made an effort to hide the chagrin which he felt over the collapse of his vague ambition some time to identify the criminal. He seized on Farnham's reference to painting to make a diversion.

"You give some of your time, you have said, to painting?"

"Yes. I have some talent, I believe, in that direction but not genius. I find pleasure in it in my leisure, without bitterness, since I have no

illusions as to greatness in my achievements. I have no ambition toward a career. My painting is only a pastime, but a most agreeable one."

"I fancy you are right," the psychologist declared. "You are sensible enough not to deceive yourself. Endeavor in art is a curse to the incompetent who cannot, or will not, admit his limitations."

"I have a studio on the top floor of the house where I live, in West Seventy-second Street. Just lately," Farnham went on in a voice that held a warmer note, "I have been trying my hand on a portrait study of Miss Daniloff."

"Oh!" Carney ejaculated, somewhat surprised. "Then she is having her portrait painted."

"Yes, in a way," the young man assented, with a smile; "but not in the sense you mean. She is, in fact, posing for me as a model. My meeting her came about through her being recommended to me by an artist who is a fellow countryman of hers. She was almost penniless when she arrived here, and she has supported herself by posing."

"I should never have guessed it," Carney exclaimed. He was remembering not only the Russian girl's delicate beauty, but her aristocratic air, her manner of gracious gentility. He found it difficult to think of her as one of those that commercialize their charms by display for hire at so much the hour. "She doesn't look like a model."

Farnham laughed outright.

"I suppose you have the ordinary idea of the model as a type. But they are of all kinds. Miss Daniloff—" again his voice softened—"poses only for the head and bust and arms. She is a wonderful subject. It is not only the regularity of her features and the vivacity of her expression, but there is a quality of gold in the coloring of her skin that is as rare as it is difficult to paint. You have noticed her hands?"

"Yes; they are exquisite."

"Exquisite, indeed!" the artist sighed. "By the same token, they are beyond the skill of any painter."

Farnham talked freely of himself and his work, warmed by the evident sympathy of his listener. Carney found himself greatly attracted by the young man, who displayed lively intelligence and wholesome feeling. In every instance when the Russian girl was brought into the conversation, there came a change in Farnham's tones, even in his whole manner, that indicated clearly enough the state of his feeling toward the girl. Carney realized that the man before him was passionately in love with Vera Daniloff, though there was no hint of this in spoken words. Again there came to the psychologist a recollection of how in Andrieff's chamber the stricken girl had sought refuge in Farnham's arms, how she had gone so simply

and so directly to the protection of that embrace. The memory inclined him to believe that the feeling of love was reciprocal. But there came to him, too, memory of the joy that had transfigured Vera at the coming into her presence of Boris Goshkoff. He remembered as well her assertion as to what her own language meant to her. Had her delight over the advent of the Russian actor had its source in her craving for the things of home, or had the cause been still deeper, something personal, a matter of the man himself? While his guest continued talking, Carney debated the affair without reaching any conclusion, except that his own sympathies were enlisted on the side of this American gentleman, whom he already regarded as a friend. He guessed that Farnham had not yet put his fortune to the test, and also that the young man was none too confident of a successful issue. For Farnham remained throughout the morning obviously constrained. Though he talked frankly, and laughed pleasantly, there was in his manner and expression an intangible quality that suggested one secretly ill at ease. Carney set down the cause as the apprehensiveness of a lover who was fearful over the outcome of his suit. It did not occur to the psychologist, after his guest's departure, that there might be another explanation of Farnham's constraint, an explanation wholly unromantic, sordid, dreadful.

CHAPTER VIII

A STARTLING REVELATION

A FEW days later, Carney called again on the Russian girl, who welcomed him warmly. Her candid pleasure over his coming had a most agreeable effect on the visitor. The psychologist was vastly attracted by Vera's unusual personality. He experienced keen pleasure in the contemplation of her loveliness of face, her gracefulness of form, her vivacity of expression, so changeable, yet always charming. He found especial pleasure, too, in her intellectual phases, which always interested him, though often they appeared puzzling. Had he been a younger man, he reflected, he would undoubtedly have fallen desperately in love with the girl, whose fascination was of an undeniable sort, and this a sort to increase rather than to diminish with more intimate acquaintance. Since he was beyond the age of romance, the psychologist permitted himself to bask at ease in her radiance, with no ardent hopes, but with delight in the frank friendliness that swiftly grew between them. At the very outset, his feeling toward the girl had in it something of a paternal quality. A sense of responsibility in her behalf developed. It seemed

to him as if their extraordinary first meeting had been designed by fate to establish a relationship both intimate and enduring. His interest extended definitely to any love-affair in which she might be involved. His own prejudice in favor of Farnham as a suitor influenced him to speak of the young man, and he told Vera of the visit he had received.

"He informed me," Carney concluded, "that, in addition to being an architect, he is a painter also — especially of portraits."

The girl nodded vigorously.

"He paints really splendidly," she declared, and her enthusiasm was genuine. "I know something of such things, and his work is excellent. Did he tell you that I had posed for him?"

"Yes."

"Did he tell you what he said of my hands?" The tender lips curved in a joyous smile.

"He said that they are beautiful," Carney answered, "as indeed they are." He was a little embarrassed over the boldness of the compliment.

But the girl made no disclaimer. Instead, she extended her arms, with the hands upraised so that she could study the graceful lines, the dimples, the tapering fingertips, the delicate coloring, white tempered with rosy gold. She made no secret of her pleasure in the survey. Her satisfaction was frank and naïve, like that of a child.

"Yes," she agreed, "he thinks they are beautiful, and he has told me so." Her voice had softened a little, and the listener wondered if it were also touched with tenderness—he was not quite sure. Then, Vera laughed. "But he said something else, too. He gritted his teeth, and he said, 'Those damn' hands!' Ah, yes, dear Doctor Carney, seven days did he so toil over these fingers of mine, and at the end of the seventh day he said it—'Those damn' hands!' You see, he snapped at a larger quantity than he could masticate." A frown wrinkled her forehead, while the psychologist stared uncomprehending. "No, he himself said it, but not quite like that. Oh—he bit off a larger quantity than he could masticate. You understand?"

Light burst on Carney.

"He bit off more than he could chew, when he set out to paint your hands."

"Exactly. Masticate means the same as chew, but it does not sound so snappy. 'Chew' is much more idiotic."

"Idiomatic," the Doctor corrected. The girl, however, gave him no heed. Her face had suddenly sobered. As she spoke, a note that was almost defiant sounded in her voice.

"But I shall not go to Mr. Farnham's studio again."

"The picture is finished, then?"

A shake of the head was the girl's decisive answer.

"I shall not go there again," she repeated. "Something has occurred." The blue eyes regarded Carney questioningly for a little. It seemed that she was in a mood to make a confidence, yet doubtful as to the propriety of such a course. Presently confidence in this new friend overcame the instinct toward reticence. She had been troubled by a deep perplexity, and welcomed this opportunity to share her trouble with another. The matter was so intimate and of a sort so sinister that she had to overcome a great reluctance, but she was deeply impressed by the sympathy of Carney's manner, and her trust in him was such that she had no fear of betrayal by him. Moreover, she felt further justification of her course from the fact that Carney himself had not been wholly frank in his disclosures to Deputy Commissioner Maxwell. He had kept silence concerning the woman who had claimed to recognize Farnham. So, at last, Vera spoke her mind freely:

"I shall not go again to his studio, because I cannot understand. I shall tell you in the hope that you may find some explanation. But this must be between just you and me."

"Of course. I shall not reveal anything you may tell me in confidence. Perhaps it will make

it easier for you if I say at once that I overheard your remark in the cab about having met Farnham in Ninth Avenue the day before."

"Ah!" Relief was in the exclamation. He had heard, and he had said nothing—the man could be trusted. She paused for a little to arrange her thoughts, then burst forth impulsively:

"It is not that I wish to make a noise like a pig."

Carney's mouth fell open in sheer amazement. His bewilderment was plain to Vera, and she resented it.

"What is it?" she demanded sharply. "What is the word for making such a noise?"

"Er—perhaps you mean squeal," was the doubtful answer.

The girl's face lighted, and her smile was grateful.

"That is it—squeal. I heard the policeman, Maxwell, say it when I was in his office. He spoke of a prisoner who would squeal. I thought it very odd. It sounded as if they meant to torture him. But I listened, and so I learned that to squeal means to make a confession that implicates one's fellows in crime, one's—ha!—pals. To squeal is one of your idiotic expressions."

For once, Carney did not offer a correction.

"It is indeed," he assented.

"So, you understand now," the girl went on,

and her voice was serious again. "I do not wish to squeal on Edward—Mr. Farnham. He has been my great friend, my best friend. But I would tell you, since I trust you, and I hope for help from you—help to understand." She halted for a little to arrange her thoughts, then went on, speaking swiftly and concisely:

"The woman there in that house said that she had seen Edward the day before. Well, she had although he denied it, as you yourself heard, Doctor Carney. I said nothing then, though I wondered greatly, since I knew that he lied to the woman. You have told me that you heard what I said in the cab. It was then that I taxed him with his deceit. And, again, he lied. He protested still that the woman was mistaken. But there was more. I myself had gone to that house, at once after receiving Andrieff's letter. As I entered the hall, Edward came down the stairs. He told me not to go up, since Andrieff was absent. He declared that he was in great haste, but that later he would make everything clear to me. Before I could question him further, he hurried away from me. I was startled, and I went back home greatly mystified. I could not understand why Edward should have gone to visit Andrieff. I had shown him Andrieff's letter the evening before, but I know of no reason why he should have gone to the place. And he will tell me nothing—al-

ways he lies. That is all. He denies me, just as he denied the woman. Can you tell me what it means? I am half-mad trying to understand, and I understand—nothing!"

The psychologist remained silent, wholly at a loss for any suggestion to offer the girl in her perplexity. He turned his gaze away from the beautiful pleading face, from the entreaty in the eyes fixed so eagerly on him, from the wistfulness of the parted lips as she waited for words to lessen her misery.

"I trusted him so," she breathed gently, as Carney still maintained helpless silence. "I should trust him again, if he would but let me."

"He denies absolutely that he visited the house the day before we met there?" Carney demanded, at last.

"Yes."

There followed a period of silence. Carney's reflections were of the gloomiest. He could hit on no means for relieving the apprehensions of the girl. Her statement had only served to make definite the vague suspicion that had already arisen in his own mind, from which he had resolutely turned his thoughts. Now, in the face of the girl's revelation he was compelled to admit the reality of damning evidence against Farnham. The young man's denials to both the woman and the girl were useless. Vera had characterized

them rightly—liës, lies! And the fact that he thus denied was proof of guilt. Carney was unhappily aware that, had the facts become known to the police, Farnham would at this moment have been in a cell, charged with the murder of Andrieff. The thought was appalling to the psychologist. He remembered the clean-cut, intelligent, wholesome face of the architect, the magnetic personality, the charm that so quickly won friendship. In spite of the evidence, the Doctor retained his feeling of confidence in the innocence of Farnham. The feeling was shaken severely, but it was not destroyed. He had, too, a conviction that the girl, also, notwithstanding her torment over the young man's falsehood, could not bring herself to believe in his blood-guilt. Impulsively, he spoke in order to verify this conviction:

"Do you believe that Farnham killed Andrieff?"

"No!" the answer was spoken with firmness, without any trace of hesitation or doubting. But her voice quavered as she added: "Only, I cannot understand."

"Nor do I believe him guilty," Carney asserted. "But, like you, I cannot understand." Then, to cheer the girl in her despair, to cheer himself as well, he added: "Somehow, we shall learn the truth, and the truth will clear him—it must."

Even as he uttered the words, Carney felt that they were feeble, but he could think of nothing more definite to promise. He was ashamed of his inability to offer any real consolation to Vera in her distress. His covert glance showed that she sat huddled in dejection, her face pale, her eyes downcast. The two remained silent during an interval of minutes, each busy with depressing thoughts. Presently, however, Carney's mood changed, as mental activity overcame feeling. As he reviewed the girl's narrative, he considered the fact that she had set out to visit Andrieff immediately after receiving from him the letter for which she had waited so long, but had been turned aside from her purpose on encountering Farnham. The discovery of the murder had been made a day later. The thought came to Carney that in the interval before the slaying of Andrieff the man might have written a second time. At once, the psychologist questioned her as to this:

"Have you received any other letter from Andrieff?"

Vera aroused herself with a start, and regarded the speaker with astonishment.

"I had only the one letter from Andrieff, in which he told me where to find him. He said nothing more. There was no other letter."

"How do you know?"

Vera uttered a monosyllable in Russian, evi-

dently an exclamation of impatience.

"How do I know?" she repeated. "Because then he was killed."

"Not until many hours after he had written the letter you received," Carney pointed out. "Andrieff had time enough to write you again. Have you been to the Post Office since getting the one letter?"

"No."

"Then, I suggest that you do so. There is a bare possibility that a second letter may be waiting for you—a letter containing some sort of clue. Will you go in the morning?"

"Yes," Vera answered obediently. But her voice was colorless.

It was with a feeling of shame over his inability to assuage the girl's grief that Carney made his farewell.

CHAPTER IX

FARNHAM'S DESPAIR

HITHERTO, Carney had been able to avoid much thinking over the problem presented by Farnham's denial that he had visited the premises in Ninth Avenue on the day preceding the discovery of Andrieff's body. The psychologist had allowed his prejudice in favor of the architect to convince him that the young man could have no guilty association with the crime, and he had therefore resisted the intrusion of the puzzle on his thoughts. He had been influenced, too, by a natural desire to disavow any responsibility in the affair. This excuse had served in some measure to justify his own conduct. He suffered from a lurking suspicion that his failure to reveal everything to the authorities had been culpable, to say the least, and the simplest method of escape from self-condemnation had been by refusal to let the matter occupy his mind. Now, however, the situation had abruptly changed. The difficulty was no longer merely something that had to do with the relations between himself and the police; or with the relations between himself and his conscience: it now had to do with the relations be-

tween himself and Vera Daniloff. He no longer stood alone to confront the problem: the Russian girl was joined with him, and the two of them alike must face the issue. It was here that his responsibility increased, became a serious burden, possibly a dangerous one. In his own case, an instinctive liking for Farnham, an intuitive trust in the young man's integrity, had guided his course. But, in the case of the girl, as seemed certain to Carney, the emotion involved was stronger than liking, was in fact love. There had been cadences in her voice that hinted of the secret hidden in her heart. The very strength of her feeling as she revealed it in telling the story of her trouble bore witness that she loved the man whom she accused. There was further evidence in her refusal to give credence to that conclusion as to Farnham's guilt which would naturally follow from the things she knew. She had limited her denunciation to the lies: she had denied the possibility of a deeper guilt. So, then, Carney realized that he could no longer consult his own convenience, that he could no longer rest passive. He had become the ally of a distraught girl — rather, of a woman fearful for the safety of her lover, fearful even for the safety of her love. There was need of action. Somehow, the mystery must be cleared. Yet, Carney found himself wholly baffled as to the means. He carried the problem to bed with him

that night, with the expectation of giving it some hours of concentrated thought. But he was no sooner between the sheets than he fell fast asleep.

The psychologist awoke full of vigor. The problem was still present in his mind, and he perceived with a feeling of mild disgust that his subconscious self had done nothing during the hours of repose to make light in the darkness. "The subconscious is bunk," Carney growled to himself, and then grinned as he reflected how effective this statement—which he would not make—would prove in one of his lectures. Vera Daniloff, he meditated, would classify it as idiotic, and she would be right.

Nevertheless, though the problem still reared itself as formidable as before, the psychologist now contemplated it without dismay. New vigor had flowed into him during the night, and he felt fit to do battle and to conquer, whatever might be the odds against him. One thing he knew: Farnham had not been the stranger on the elevated train—so, Farnham could not be the murderer. Remained, then, only the mystery as to the young man's lies to the frowsy woman of the tenement, to Vera Daniloff.

"I'll get at the truth somehow," Doctor Carney muttered, as he stared unseeing at the headlines in his morning paper.

The telephone rang, and a visitor was announced.

"Let him come up," Carney called. He hung the receiver on its hook, and stood facing the entrance door. "It beats the devil!" he exclaimed with what, for him, was a considerable degree of violence. "I have a feeling that a — er — a crisis is approaching." Then his servant threw open the door and Edward Farnham entered the room. It needed only a glance to reveal the fact that the visitor was in the grip of strong emotion. The tall form did not seem quite so tall: it was held rigidly as if in the tension of overpowering feeling, yet had an aspect of being somehow shrunken. The slight stoop of head and shoulders, which was characteristic of the architect, was emphasized; it gave him the appearance of one bowed under a burden too great for his strength. The face was white, as if from either exhaustion or fear, or perhaps both. But the gray eyes were unusually brilliant, with the fires of the spirit burning in them. The lips were set firmly, and they did not relax into a smile during utterance of a formal greeting. Farnham seemed to be waiting tensely for the trivial formalities of the occasion to be ended. It was only when the two men were seated opposite each other that he frankly gave way to his mood, and revealed the motive of his coming, freely made known the causes of the de-

spair that possessed him. His opening words shocked Carney, and keyed him instantly to a taut appreciation of the crisis.

"Doctor Carney," Farnham demanded without preface in a tone almost fierce under the effort at repression, "do you think I'm a murderer?"

"Good God, no!" the psychologist ejaculated. There was no hint of hesitation, no suggestion of a reservation in his denial. Yet, the sincerity of the response was powerless to relieve Farnham's torment. The young man went on speaking rapidly, and the bitterness in his voice was like a cry of anguish.

"Nor do I think that I am a murderer! But I am half mad in trying to understand the truth of this thing. I know that I did not kill this Russian peasant, Andrieff. I know that I am innocent of the crime."

"Of course you are innocent," Carney interposed hastily, in an attempt to soothe the other's desperation. "The idea of your guilt is too absurd. No one accuses you of killing him."

"You are wrong," came the vehement retort. "It is only a question of time until all the world will believe me a murderer, will believe me to have been the assassin of that poor old man, whom I never so much as saw alive. I cannot even blame the world for believing me guilty. The police have evidence enough to convict me.

The evidence is enough to overcome the personal bias of one who regarded me as a friend at least."

"You exaggerate," Carney protested. But Farnham shook his head.

"No. The evidence against me is so strong that I myself am staggered by it. I am forced to doubt myself, my own senses, my own identity. I know that I did not kill Andrieff. But there is proof, ample proof, that I did—and I cannot explain it away."

"You must tell me the whole story in detail," the psychologist urged. "There must be some simple explanation of the facts that so trouble you. For myself, the evidence against you is worthless, because I saw the man that committed the murder—it was not you."

"It is because of that belief on your part that I had courage to come to you. No one else in the world could credit what I say." Farnham spoke more quietly now. Some measure of relief had followed his frantic outburst. His listener's sympathy exercised a calming effect on the turmoil of his spirit.

"There is nothing plausible in what I have to tell," he declared morosely. "The case against me depends on the fact that I was seen in the Ninth Avenue house the day before you and I and Vera Daniloff met there. I was seen there about dusk that day by the woman tenant, and also by

Vera Daniloff herself. These two women both identify me perfectly. The tenant woman did not speak to me, but Vera Daniloff did. It is useless to claim that she was mistaken, for we have been friends for months with daily meetings, in which we were often together for hours at a time. It is quite impossible to believe her mistaken in her identification of me."

"But she was?"

"Yes, she was mistaken. My first and only visit to the Ninth Avenue house was when I found her and you together in the room where Andrieff was lying dead. But that fact rests solely on my say-so. And my denial is no more than what one would expect from any accused criminal. In fact, my denial tends to prove my guilt. When the woman tenant accosted me, I asserted that she had made a mistake. But in her testimony to the police she described not only my appearance in general, but details as to my clothes. You may take it for granted that the identification is complete."

"It is extraordinary," Carney murmured feebly. He averted his eyes from the young man's stricken face. He felt helpless in the emergency. There had been a pleasurable excitement in the earlier stages of this new adventuring into relationship with crime. He had been distracted from overmuch absorption in study, from analysis and intro-

spection that tended toward morbidity. The contrast of a new contact with the outer world had jolted his mind from routine. Emotions strange to him had been set in lively movement, and he had found himself living with a zest as agreeable as it was unfamiliar. His haphazard excursion into the underworld had been an enjoyable experience, a novelty refreshing to the jaded spirit of the scholar. The singular episode of the man in the elevated train and the subsequent event had humanized and invigorated him. The adventure had been pleasant and profitable—until now! Now, however, the tragedy that at the outset had concerned only an obscure Russian peasant had broadened its scope so that, at this moment, it included Vera Daniloff and Edward Farnham and —last of all and most amazingly—himself. For the menace against Farnham was also a threat to wreck the heart happiness of the girl. And the evil lowering over these two cast its shadow on him as well, since he had come to count both the young man and the maiden as friends. The catastrophe found him unready, unable to offer any resistance, to suggest any remedy. He had lived his life in the sheltered places. This crisis, with its issues of life and death, was too great for his puny strength. So, he could only sit wretchedly, with eyes averted, and repeat that futile word, "extraordinary."

Then, presently, Carney rallied a little from the consternation that had so beset him. A sense of shame stirred him to throw off the apathy that lay heavy and deadening on his intellect. He felt that he had been acting like an hysterical woman, a nincompoop before the emergency. He had been appalled by the suddenness of the demand made on him by his young friend's confidence. After all, the facts now revealed were little worse than what he had already known or suspected. Indeed, he had lost his nerve for no adequate reason. He prided himself on the shrewdness of his mind: now was the occasion to test his ability. Instead of doddering in a maze of perplexity, he must concentrate on all possible schemes for explanation of Farnham's predicament. By a stern effort of will, Carney set himself to consider the situation with some degree of precision, resolutely pushing out of consciousness so far as he could the feeling of panic. Almost at once, the effort was rewarded, for there came to him an idea that seemed of prime importance.

"In spite of the circumstantial evidence," he said briskly, "you are in no actual danger. Conviction for murder requires always proof of a sufficient motive. There is no evidence against you in that direction."

Again, Farnham shook his head.

"Unfortunately, you are quite wrong," was his

grim rejoinder. "There is motive enough in the eyes of the law to send me to the chair."

"Impossible!"

"Not impossible from a sordid viewpoint. You must remember that I have enjoyed the confidence of Miss Daniloff. For a long time I have known that she was anxiously waiting for the coming of Andrieff. I knew, too, the nature of his mission —that he was to bring her the sole remainder of the family fortune from Russia. I knew that the heirlooms were of great value. When Vera received the letter from Andrieff at the General Delivery, she told me of it, and she told me also of her intended visit to the old man. In the judgment of the police, the evidence would be complete. I am not wealthy, and it would be easy to suppose that avarice incited me to the crime. So, it would be believed that I went to the address in haste, in order to forestall Miss Daniloff, that I found Andrieff in his room, and killed him in order to secure possession of the jewels. Afterward, on my way out, I was seen by the woman tenant, who recognized me next day, and in the lower hall I encountered Vera, and even spoke to her. She hasn't the slightest doubt in the world as to my identity on that occasion. So, you see, Doctor Carney, the chain of evidence is complete. There is nothing lacking as to the motive in this case."

Farnham fell silent, absorbed in bitter reflection.

The psychologist was dismayed for a moment. He realized that his first endeavor was a dismal failure. As Farnham had declared, sufficient motive for the crime might not be difficult to establish. But the spirit of combat was fully aroused in the Doctor, and, where before he had been craven, he was now dauntless. His mental powers were actively engaged, and his thoughts occupied his full attention, so that he had no heed for emotions, of doubt or fear. There was a problem to be solved. The greater the obstacles in the way of a solution, the greater the triumph in overcoming them. He was assured of Farnham's innocence; the evidence seemed to prove the young man's guilt. It was necessary, then, to scrutinize this evidence, to prove it false. It could be done by clear thinking. With sufficient pains, it is always possible to demonstrate truth. And just as Carney had comforted himself with this assertion, he received another violent shock.

Farnham interrupted his brooding, and spoke rapidly as if in haste to be done with a troublesome matter.

"I have saved the worst, Doctor Carney," he said sardonically, "as a tidbit for your credulousness. The knife with which Andrieff was killed belonged to me."

"Good God!" ejaculated the psychologist. Afterward, he remained in stunned silence while

his visitor told in more detail of this last fatal bit of evidence.

"You can imagine what a shock it must have been to me there in that room, when I went over to Andrieff's dead body to search it for the jewels, and saw the handle of the knife standing up from his breast, for I recognized that handle at the first glimpse. You have seen the knife since down at Police Headquarters, so you know it was really a sort of dagger, with a double-edged blade about six inches long and a handle of hard black wood, grooved and with a knob on the end to give a good hand-hold. That handle was roughly made, and it was easy to recognize it. The knife was given to me by a friendly guide with whom I once traveled in Egypt. He himself had made the handle. There is a sheath for the blade made of snakeskin, with a light loop of braided leather for slinging the weapon on the arm. The sheath is lying on a shelf in my studio this minute—unless the police have found it. When I saw my knife there as the instrument of murder, I was sickened. The fact dazed me. I am not out of the daze yet. It is all of a piece—all so ghastly, so impossible. Now, do you wonder that I am half mad, that I go in terror, that I can see no way out? My only ray of hope has come from your belief that you have seen the murderer and that I am innocent. But of what help can this be

to me, actually? Your testimony could avail nothing against the evidences of my guilt. I feel already like a fugitive from justice. I owe my liberty to the silence of Vera Daniloff and yourself. But the detectives will get my description from that woman in the tenement, and my arrest then can only be a question of time. I have not dared to wear again the suit and hat I was wearing that day. When I walk in the streets, it is with constant dread of feeling a hand on my shoulder, of hearing the words, 'You are wanted!'" The concluding utterance, though softly spoken was heavy with despair.

Doctor Carney, while Farnham talked, had overcome in some measure his first dismay at this latest revelation. He was again able to relegate emotion to a secondary place, and to concentrate his mind on the problems presented by the case. He was still certain of the young man's innocence. His conviction concerning the guilt of the stranger on the elevated train remained unshaken. He therefore set himself to study the facts in search of any possible explanation harmonizing with his belief.

"You have no suspicion as to who may have taken the knife from your studio?" he asked.

"No. It is a long time since I have noticed it. It might have been taken by any one among hundreds of different visitors. I entertain regularly,

and often strangers to me are brought by other guests. It would be impossible to pick out the thief of the knife."

"Have you thought of a double?" the psychologist questioned.

"Yes," Farnham replied, without enthusiasm. "But a double so like me as to deceive Miss Daniloff must certainly have attracted my own attention if I had ever seen him. And if he had been my guest at the studio, with opportunity to steal the knife, I should have remarked the resemblance, as everyone else would have remarked it. As a matter of fact, I have never seen or heard of any one who was my double. The idea offers no help."

"But are you sure?" the Doctor persisted. "Has there never been any one—a brother, or cousin?"

"My elder brother resembled me," the architect answered wearily. "He was taken prisoner by the Germans, and died."

"Sometimes such reports are erroneous," Carney declared eagerly. "Of course, the possibility is most remote, but there is, after all, a possibility that he may have escaped, may have returned to this country."

But Farnham would not tolerate the suggestion.

"That is nonsense," he asserted, and there was indignation in his voice. "Had my brother lived,

he could not have done this thing. I could believe it of myself as easily."

"Unless his sufferings had unhinged his mind," was the quiet comment of the psychologist. "But let us leave all that, and consider another possibility. You know, of course, that as a psychologist I have made a particular study of various mental abnormalities. To cover the case, it is necessary to consider some of these. There are forms of amnesia, of aphasia, in which the victim becomes unconscious of his acts. There are, too, varieties of dissociation of personality, in which a single individual develops duality, and does not carry his consciousness across the break. Thus, in this instance, you might have committed the crime, and afterward be completely ignorant of the fact."

"I understand. The possibility seems monstrous, but so far, it is the only one that fits the circumstances. Must I believe then that, though I know my own innocence, I am actually guilty of a foul murder?"

Doctor Carney sprang to his feet, and spoke with an earnestness that was convincing.

"No, you need believe nothing of the sort. You are innocent—I know that much. Damn circumstantial evidence anyhow," he went on with surprising violence. "We'll riddle it, tear it in tatters." He was again yielding to the rush of

feeling, with reason in abeyance. His enthusiasm was so contagious that it penetrated to the spirit of Farnham, and comforted him a little. The young man went away soon, still in misery over his dreadful plight, but with the burden eased ever so slightly. He had confessed all his trouble to a friend, and that confession had brought a certain sense of relief from the intolerable strain. And the relief was emphasized by that friend's unabated confidence, by that friend's enduring belief in his innocence.

CHAPTER X

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAD

DOCTOR CARNEY was minded to meditate deeply on the perplexities involved by the predicament of Farnham. But he was given scant opportunity to marshal his thoughts, for scarcely had his visitor gone when the telephone again summoned him. He recognized over the wire the voice of Vera Daniloff.

"You were right, and I was wrong," she said after the exchange of greetings.

"You mean—?" Carney asked, at a loss to understand.

"I mean, about the letter—the letter from Andrieff. I went to the Post Office the first thing this morning. A letter from him was waiting for me. It was longer than the other, more explicit."

"Tell me," the psychologist urged. He was aglow with enthusiasm over this latest development. Here might be the needed clue to all the mystery. But the girl checked his enthusiasm for the moment.

"It would be better for you to call here this afternoon, if that would be convenient for you. Then I could read the letter to you—translated."

Doctor Carney sighed over the delay, but realized its advisability. Before he could answer, however, Vera's voice sounded again.

"I am anxious to have you know what he says. There is some real information in the letter. Can you beat it?"

"Why—er—no, I don't think I can," the Doctor stammered. The girl's lapses into slang always disconcerted him.

"Oh, I am so disappointed!" was the astonishing exclamation by way of answer. "I did so wish to have you know at once what Andrieff wrote to me. When can you come, then?"

"But I can come this afternoon, just as you suggested," the Doctor declared in great bewilderment. "I said nothing of not coming."

"It may be that I made a mistake in your idiot—idiom," Vera ventured in a distressed tone. "I asked you, could you beat it—and you said you could not."

"Yes, but—" Carney began, only to be interrupted.

"It is not, then, that 'to beat it,' means to go or to come in a step-lively manner? It is surely an idiotism—I have heard it. So I said, 'can you beat it?' That is to say, can you come down here right away?"

"Ah, yes, exactly," the psychologist ejaculated hastily as the girl paused. "It was stupid of me

I shall come down at once." He did not deem it a fitting time to attempt instruction in the vagaries of the vernacular. Evidently, the Russian girl felt no need of such instruction in this instance, for with a phrase of satisfaction over his anticipated visit she rang off.

Nevertheless, Doctor Carney's eagerness to know the contents of Andrieff's missive was not to be satisfied immediately. On his arrival at Vera's apartment, he found the Russian actor, Goshkoff, lounging at ease, and plainly most successful in distracting his hostess from any seriousness of mood. As Vera greeted the new arrival, her back was to Goshkoff, and by an arching of the brows, a slight movement of the lips and a backward tilt of the head, she indicated clearly enough that nothing must be said of Andrieff's letter in the presence of the young man. Carney somewhat stiffly acknowledged the suave salutation of the other guest, and then sat himself down to nurse his chagrin over the delay. He did not try to take part in the conversation, which quickly relapsed into Russian. The Doctor watched and listened without understanding, and nibbled fiercely at the bristles of his mustache. And as he watched, blinking alternately at one and the other of the pair before him, he found himself again doubting as to the state of the girl's heart. For she was truly another woman when in the

presence of her compatriot. It seemed too much to believe that the language alone could effect a change so startling. It were easier to suspect that the presence of Goshkoff provoked a joyousness due to the magnetism of the man himself. Indeed, Carney was compelled reluctantly to admit the force of that magnetism. Though he could not understand a word that the fellow spoke, he was fascinated by the lively play of emotion on the mobile face, the eloquence of the brilliant dark eyes, the charm of mirthfulness in the smile. Evidently, the fellow's chief recourse was to things of a lighter sort, for there was most often a note as of laughter in his voice, and this was echoed daintily by the girl as she listened. Her responses, too, were in like vein for the great part. Occasionally, however, Goshkoff deepened his tones to seriousness, which was reflected instantly in the graver mood of Vera. From time to time, the actor hummed fragments of songs — Russian, Italian, French, all sung with equal fluency, all understood with equal facility by the listening girl. Carney, who understood never a word, could still apprehend the sentiment of each in turn, so expressive were both voice and face of the singer. Most of the songs were of a frivolously amusing sort, so effective that the psychologist found himself grinning at, he knew not what. But there were others in the

Russian, minor melodies, somber and barbaric. These folk songs held the girl entranced, thrilled to the deeps of her being. They were the songs of home, sole souvenirs of the past, of things hopelessly lost. The spell laid upon her was potent, nor could Carney, watching and listening, wonder. He himself felt his emotions strangely stirred. There were both sweetness and strength in the restrained baritone of the actor, and he phrased the music with finished skill. The psychologist felt a stirring of tumultuous emotions within him. He caught vague glimpses of snow-clad reaches, saw silhouettes of dancing men with bearded faces, shadows dancing with savage agility, flinging booted legs, leaping, squatting, shouting. Carney shook his head as if to clear it of visions, and began again to nibble fiercely at the bristles of his mustache, which for a time had been neglected.

Presently, Vera turned to her silent guest.

"Boris intends to go into opera," she said. "He will be a success, will he not?"

"Yes," Carney answered simply. But there was no fervor in his voice, nor did he look toward Goshkoff, whose own gaze turned with intentness on this little man so silent, so insignificant.

When, finally, the actor had taken his departure, Vera produced the letter which she had received that morning at the General Delivery, and

read a rough translation of it to Carney. This letter had evidently been written only a few hours later than the first note, in which Andrieff had given his address, without adding any information of importance. It seemed as if perhaps some foreboding of the fate that threatened him had led the Russian peasant to write more fully to the mistress whom he loved. He told in some detail of the slow and toilsome journey by which he had finally reached New York, still carrying safely the treasure of jewels entrusted to his charge. But, soon after his arrival in the city, he became convinced that agents of the Russian Reds had gained knowledge of his identity and whereabouts, and this in spite of the fact that he had made no confidences to anyone, even at the outset refraining from an attempt to locate Vera herself. Apprehension seized on him; he was certain that somehow knowledge of his mission had been obtained by the enemies of his mistress. He suspected that they were only waiting for a favorable opportunity to rob him of the jewels. In order to save the gems for their rightful owner, with some thought, too, for his own safety, Andrieff decided on flight to a new hiding place. He had the address of an elder brother, who had come to America some years before, and had remained. This was in a small village, Clinton, on the Connecticut shore of Long Island Sound. Andrieff chose the

place for a refuge. He left New York in the night, on foot, and, still on foot, followed the shore road day after day, until at last he attained his destination. For the sake of secrecy, he questioned no one even then, but set himself to explore along the water front, where his brother had a shack. Success was not long delayed. Within a few hours, he recognized his brother, wearing high rubber boots, wading through the shallows of an inlet and industriously raking the muddy bottom. There were warm greetings, and Andrieff was made welcome in the shack, a tiny single room built of unpainted boards with a roof made watertight by tarred paper. It was evident that Andrieff was soothed and cheered by the reunion with his brother and by the homelike atmosphere of the humble shelter in which he now dwelt. The letter contained an expression of satisfaction over the icon on the wall in which the brother took great pride.

The calm of his sojourn in this remote and peaceful spot was rudely broken by the appearance of two Russian strangers in the neighborhood, who attempted to establish friendly relations with the brother. Andrieff was alarmed by their coming, sure that they were emissaries of his enemies. He did not hesitate, but again put his reliance in flight, and on the night following their advent he started on the return journey to New York. Im-

mediately on his arrival, he had written the first note to his mistress, and the longer communication had followed almost at once. The letter closed with expressions of unfailing devotion to his mistress and of faithfulness always to the trust imposed on him.

"It is sad, is it not?" the girl said, as she concluded her translation of the clumsily scrawled sheets. "Yes, it is sad. Andrieff was a faithful servant. He tried his best. It was not his fault that he failed, that those devils robbed him. He gave his life to defend his trust. But the letter gives nothing that can help. There is no clue by which to track the thief and murderer."

"No," Carney agreed, "the letter offers no clue. It is touching, it arouses our sympathy and admiration, but it is quite useless for pointing toward detection of the criminal." He spoke disconsolately, affected by a bitter disappointment. Since the telephone message from Vera announcing the receipt of the letter, he had unconsciously built high hopes of some important discovery. Those hopes had gradually crumbled during the girl's reading, and had collapsed utterly as she made an end. There was no single reference in all Andrieff's narrative that afforded a suggestion for possible action. The mystery stood just as before, the letter shed no light. Farnham remained accused by circumstances. There was

nothing in Andrieff's confidences to offset the facts that seemed to prove the architect's guilt. Carney sighed, and remained silent in discouragement, his thoughts muddled by the disappointment to which he had been subjected. When, at last, he spoke, it was idly, as his gaze rested on the cages of the parrots, two of them covered, the third uncovered, in which the mutilated bird kept up a monotonous fluttering.

"I wonder, did Andrieff carry the three parrots with him in all that wandering up and down the shore of the Sound?"

"Probably he did," Vera answered, without interest. "He avoided acquaintances, he would have no one with whom to leave them."

"But the idea is absurd," the psychologist protested. "A man flying secretly for his life—and carrying three bird cages! How could he go stealthily, eluding all observation? Why, his picture would be in the papers, on the screen at the movies."

Vera laughed, not at the Doctor's vehemence, but at a recollection.

"No," she exclaimed, "Andrieff did not go like a parade along the highway. I can guess how he managed. Once at home, in Russia, I remember, after he returned from a voyage, he came to visit us. He was just like anyone else, there was nothing to notice—you see, he carried no bird cages.

But soon, while he talked, he reached in a pocket of his heavy jacket, and took out a parrot, which he set on his shoulder. Then he reached in another pocket, and took out another parrot. From other pockets, he took out a third parrot and a fourth, which perched on his wrists. When he was ready to go, he put the parrots back in his pockets. The birds were very noisy out in the light, but they had nothing to say hidden there in the dark of his pockets. Do you see then, Doctor Carney? He simply carried the three parrots back and forth stowed away in his pockets. Thus they would be hidden from sight, and they would be silent."

Carney nodded assent. The explanation was simple, and it sufficed. He wished that he might come on other explanations as readily. His eyes went again to the uncovered cage, in which the mutilated parrot kept up its interminable fluttering. Ceaselessly, too, the beak gaped open to show the stump of tongue. It was as if the unfortunate bird were forever trying vainly to voice some phrase of vital significance, words now never to be uttered. For the hundredth time, the psychologist wondered what could have been the saying thus brutally silenced, and as always he wondered in vain.

"The other parrots," he questioned, with a gesture toward the covered cages, "still repeat

those same Russian words?"

Vera answered indifferently:

"Sometimes, one calls me by name, and the other calls Andrieff. But, usually, one croaks merely tiresome repetitions of the distance—'*Sto tridtsat' dva arshina,*' one hundred and thirty yards. I am so tired of that particular distance that I leave the cloth over the cage most of the time."

"And the other?"

"The other is equally monotonous, but its cry is shorter, and not so harsh—'*s' ikonee,*' from the icon."

It was as Carney was about to go that the girl spoke with a note of pitiful appeal in her voice.

"You cannot yet help me to understand this mystery about Edward—Mr. Farnham, why it is that he so lies?"

"I do not believe that he has lied to you, or to me," the psychologist asserted stoutly. "He himself is in despair over the mystery. It seems certain that you mistook someone else for him."

The girl shook her head. Her voice rang with conviction as she answered:

"It is not as if I had had only a glimpse of him. We spoke face to face. I not only saw him, but I heard him. And I know Edward's voice." She hesitated for a moment, then flushed, and continued resolutely: "I heard his voice, and his

voice has echoes in my heart. I could not be mistaken."

The blue eyes of the girl, very tender now though dimmed by sadness, met the Doctor's gaze bravely. Before her candid sincerity, the man felt himself abashed, unable to agree, unable to deny, unable most of all to offer her any sort of comfort.

CHAPTER XI

FARNHAM EXPLAINS

VERA DANILOFF was of that vivacious temperament which revels in the joy of life as Fate gives opportunity, which tends toward complete dejection under adversity. Yet her capacity for happiness was so great, her desire for it so eager, that ordinarily she was able to find existence pleasurable even when circumstances were of a sort to warrant melancholy. It was thus that a spirit roused to combat had sustained her through all the vicissitudes of the experiences surrounding her flight from Russia. She had endured the bitterest sorrows unflinchingly, sustained throughout by the excitement of the struggle itself and by the hope of escape. She had remained undaunted after her arrival in New York during the period of waiting for Andrieff. The newness of her surroundings, the strangeness in her manner of living had agreeably diverted her thoughts, so that she had maintained tranquillity, had been interested, amused, sufficiently content during this period of transition. The entrance of Farnham into her life had been of chief importance. His personality had made instant appeal,

to which she had responded as instantly. His obvious devotion touched her to sympathy at the outset, and presently provoked a reciprocal sentiment. The two became unavowed lovers. The architect delayed a formal declaration, partly from the timidity of the true lover, who dares not to believe in the reality of his triumph, partly from a feeling of conventional restraint that imposed delay as a matter of propriety, by reason of the girl's forlorn condition. Vera herself had exercised her womanly prerogative to control the situation. She had been discreet in imposing an impalpable barrier against any direct avowal. She had a feminine willingness to be won, but, too, a feminine reluctance to appearing an easy conquest. The love-affair of the two remained thus tacit, but the circumstances connected with the slaying of Andrieff charged the silence with import. Though no definite word of love was spoken, between girl and man, the situation developed a vital emotional stress. Farnham was aflame with longing to speak his heart, but he felt that he was no longer free to offer himself, since he had become so dreadfully involved in the mesh of tragedy. He realized with despair that circumstantial evidence loudly proclaimed his complicity in a capital crime; that he was in fact little better than a fugitive from justice; that his arrest under the accusation of murder could not long be

delayed. How could he, then, offer himself as lover and protector of the girl who had been so wronged by the crime with which he was associated?

Vera gave most of her thought to the ghastly problem presented by Farnham's case. For the time being, she paid comparatively little attention to the fact that her whole fortune had disappeared, that she faced poverty in a strange land. This menace she dismissed easily enough as something for future consideration. In the meantime, she was confronted with the appalling mystery as to the conduct of the man she loved. She went over again and again all the facts as she knew them, and always the issue was only a helpless bewilderment. She could understand nothing, except that her heart was breaking. The man whom she had respected, had honored, had loved, this man whom she had so greatly desired, whom she still desired so poignantly, this lover who had come as an actuality of the flesh out of the rosy mists of maidenly dreams — he was, after all, a fraudulent thing, one who told her lies, absurd lies, lies both absurd and terrible. Surely, she could no longer either honor him or love him. She must tear him out of her heart; she must deny even the memory of him; she must be strong to destroy a love that he himself had made worthless, contemptible. And yet ——

For the thousandth time, Vera Daniloff reached this point in her meditations, and again she was interrupted. Hitherto, the interruption had come from a subtle something deep within her spirit that rebelled finally and absolutely against the decrees of reason, against even the sway of feeling. It was as if the love itself that was in her at last stirred from a lethargy, and vibrated in a defiance irresistible and dominant. But, on the morning following Doctor Carney's call, the interruption came from no secret source within the girl's own being. Instead, it was brought about by the old peasant woman's opening of the living-room door, with a phrase in Russian announcing a visitor. Vera, looking up from the couch where she crouched dejectedly amid the cushions, saw Farnham standing before her.

The young man's face was almost colorless, and its pallor was emphasized by the flames of emotion burning in the eyes. He stood silent, the head bowed a little after his habit, as he regarded the girl with an intensity that had in it something of the fierceness of desperation mingled with despair. It was a look of adoration, of entreaty, of utter hopelessness. As she met the man's fixed gaze, Vera's own eyes dilated a little, and her face, in its turn, whitened.

"You!" she exclaimed in a stricken voice. Then, the instinct of hospitality helped her to

overcome in some degree the first shock of feeling. She stood up quickly, and held out her hand. Farnham took it in both his own, and held it in a close grip. He did not speak for a few minutes, only continued to stare at her with that gaze of mixed longing and misery. The girl did not lift her glance to his face while they stood thus through long seconds of silence. Presently, however, Vera rallied her strength, and voiced a formal phrase, rather awkwardly: "Won't you sit down?"

The simple words relieved in a measure the tension of the moment. Farnham released the girl's hand, and, as she resumed her position on the couch, seated himself beside her. At once, then, he began speaking, and the words came with a rush, freighted with the profound feeling hitherto restrained.

"I had to come to you, Vera. I felt that I must tell you once more of my innocence, even though the evidence against me is so overwhelming. I do not blame you for doubting me. The evidence of your own senses is against me. Yet, that evidence is false. I am innocent. I can only declare it again and again. I have no evidence with which to offset the evidence against me. I can do no more than beg you to believe in me still, in spite of the evidence, in spite of everything. That is why I have come. I want you to trust me. Some-

how, sometime, this mystery will be explained—it must be! Give me a chance until then. Just accept the fact that here is a mystery, and, if you can't have faith in me, at least suspend judgment. You can't understand now—neither can I. But I beg you to wait. The truth must out. I am in despair now, for everything seems against me. I need your help, Vera. I need it more than you can guess. I can endure anything except your loss of faith in me. Doesn't your instinct speak in my behalf? Can't you feel that I am innocent, in spite of the evidence against me? I ask you to follow your instinct. I dare believe that your intuition tells you that I am not guilty." He fell silent, waiting for some response. The girl did not look at him, but remained huddled in the corner of the couch almost as if cowering from him. When, finally, she spoke, her voice came thinly, with hardly a trace of its accustomed musical resonance.

"I do not know, I do not understand," she protested feebly. "My intuition—if it says anything at all, it is in whispers so low that I think I do not hear them. But my memory calls out so loudly—memory of you there at that house, memory of your face, memory of your voice when you told me to go away, told me that Andrieff was not in his room." Her voice grew stronger. Its plaintive quality passed, it held a note of bitterness

as she went on speaking with increased vehemence. "You ask me to have faith in you, to suspend judgment at least until the truth shall be made known. But is it not truth that I saw you and heard you there? Am I not to believe my own eyes, my own ears? Do they tell me lies? No! I must believe them. The lies are not of their telling." She turned suddenly and straightened, to regard him with accusing eyes. "If it had been someone else, anyone not you," she went on bitterly, "I might admit a possible mistake. But, with you there could be no mistake." She forgot maidenly reserve in the depth of her feeling. "Why, I saw you, I heard your voice. I told Doctor Carney that your voice has echoes in my heart. How could I be deceived?"

In spite of her denial of his plea, a sudden exultation thrilled through Farnham. The significance of her words made him for the moment forget all the misery of his situation, filled him with a happiness that overcame every barrier. That phrase of hers concerning the echoes of his voice within her heart rang in his ears. He forgot everything save the supreme fact that thus the woman he loved had confessed her own tenderness. The love he bore her drove him to avowal.

"Oh, Vera!" he cried softly, in a voice that trembled from his effort at restraint. "You know that I love you—you must know it, must feel it."

With the words, he stretched forth his arm, and took her hand in his, holding it firmly as he continued speaking. The girl offered no resistance, but let her fingers lie limply against the firm pressure of his palm. She felt the warmth of his clasp flow swiftly through all her tissues, the subtle current of his life penetrating her, enfolding her with its potence. Perforce, she yielded to the charm of that contact, at once soothed and stimulated. Reason was lulled: She rested content in the new, strange joy of the moment. She listened in rapture as he went on speaking, "I had not meant to tell you; I felt that I had no right to tell you —yet, that I must wait for the explanation of this terrible thing. But I have no longer strength to keep silent. I love you, Vera—I love you! To win your love in return is my whole life. Nothing else matters. And you said something that makes me dare to hope: you said that my voice echoed in your heart. Did you mean that, Vera? Am I something to you, something more than other men? Do you care for me, Vera? Is there a chance that I may win you when this trouble is past? Tell me, Vera—can you give me any hope?"

His arm tensed, and he drew her a little toward him. A shiver passed over the girl's form, but she offered no resistance to his desire. His free hand went to her face, and lifted it. The eyes of the

two met in a look ardent yet probing. Again the girl felt that subtle current of the man's life borne on his gaze and flowing resistlessly through her. Her eyelids drooped languorously at last, but her lips curved in a smile of tenderness. Farnham bent his head, and kissed her.

There was an interval of pure delight for the lovers, in which they had no thought of time or place, or of the trifles and sorrows that crowd in human affairs. For a blessed period they had no concern except for themselves in the bliss of a mutual love. It was only when the emotion of joy slackened little by little, as it inevitably must always, that sanity began to return. Then, at last, they drew apart, and once again they looked at each other, curiously, somewhat doubtfully, as one looks when first awakening from a dream. Indeed, that thought came to each of them. They had dreamed, and the dream had been most wonderful, must beautiful. But it had been only a dream. The glory and the bliss of it were without power against the sordid reality that must be faced. The actuality was brought home to them by the first utterance of the girl after a long silence.

"And now, Edward, can you not tell me something more — something besides those silly lies?" She looked at him in piteous appeal.

The man's face paled, and the lines of it deep-

ened in a firmness that was touched with hardness. He gave a quick shake of the head in negation, and his voice as he answered was charged with bitterness.

"Vera, I can tell you nothing more, for I have told you only the truth."

The girl's form drooped visibly, and her eyes fell. Her voice, when she spoke again, was hardly more than a whisper.

"I still see him lying there — Andrieff lying there dead. His dead face comes between us." She shuddered and hid her face in her hands.

The man remained moveless and wordless for a time, watching the bowed figure, until his face became a mask of despair. At last, he got up slowly and quietly, and as slowly and quietly went out of the room.

CHAPTER XII

A PERPLEXING SITUATION

DOCTOR CARNEY found himself persistently baffled by the mystery surrounding the murder of Andrieff. At every attempt to concentrate on the problem, he succeeded only in a hopeless muddling of his wits. Hitherto, he had greatly prided himself on the clarity of his mental processes; he had highly esteemed his powers of ratiocination; he had flattered himself on the shrewdness of his reasoning, the exactness of his logic. Now, however, he was humbled. It was the first time that the strength of his mind had been pitted against the practicalities of life, and the result was ignominious. The previous successes had been of an academic sort, concerned with the subtleties of theory. It was humiliating to learn that his intellectual powers were helpless in the face of actuality. The psychologist realized with a mingling of shame and dismay that thus far throughout the affair his part had been chiefly that of a puppet with movements directed as Fate pulled the strings. He derived his sole satisfaction with himself from the fact that his discovery of the crime had been due to accurate

perception of facts and swift deduction from them. But, even here, his self-complacency was threatened, since he could not avoid wondering if, by any chance, the knowledge that guided him had been in reality a mental impression received from without. He was aware that it is most difficult at times to determine the source of a particular thought. It may come from an obscure operation of the mental law governing the association of ideas; or it may come from an activity of the reasoning power carried out so easily and quickly that the consciousness remains unaware of it; or it may come from without, a manifestation of telepathy. In any case, the source remains indeterminable. So, now, the Doctor strongly suspected that reason had had nothing whatever to do with his conduct at any stage of the proceedings.

Nevertheless, the psychologist, in spite of his bewilderment over the situation and his dissatisfaction with his own accomplishment, was enjoying himself hugely. For the first time in his life, he was intimately related to the things that really count, matters of life and death, of joy and sorrow, of love and hate. The association thrilled him. He was so identified with the crucial emotions of others that they became his own. His suddenly developed friendship for Farnham, his warm fondness for Vera Daniloff made their af-

fairs his personal concern. His sympathy for the architect and the girl was increased by a visit to the former on the day following the interview of the lovers. Farnham candidly related the essential facts as to that interview. The young man's mood was, however, even more depressed than before, for he could imagine no possibility of escape from the dangers of his situation, and the evil of it was enhanced by the knowledge that the girl loved him, that disaster to himself must mean added suffering for her.

"It is a strange thing," Farnham said at last, musingly, with a melancholy smile, "that Vera should have spoken as she did to you of my voice having its echoes in her heart. The phrase came to me as a revelation of her love, and that knowledge broke down my restraint, so that I told her of my love. We were happy a little while then there together—until she remembered my 'lies.' But our mutual confession came from her belief in the truth of the lie. She believed it was I whom she met at the house that day. It was not I. Somehow, she was deceived both by her eyes and by her ears. The voice of that unknown man seemed to her my voice, and because it seemed to her my voice, it echoed in her heart, as she told you. Thus she was deceived and thus out of that deception came her confession of love for me."

"It is indeed curious, as you say," Carney

agreed. "And in being curious it is of a piece with all the rest of this affair. Have you thought of any plan?" he asked abruptly.

Farnham shook his head.

"I have the choice between two evils: I can stay here to be jailed, or I can run. If I am to run, I had better do it soon, or I may not have the chance. The only wonder is that the police haven't been after me before this."

Carney nodded acquiescence.

"Just the same, I believe I'd hold on a bit longer. Something may turn up."

"What can turn up? The murderer?"

"Perhaps," the psychologist asserted, but without conviction in his tone. "The fact that we have nothing to go on is not really so important as it seems. Everything so far has fallen out of a clear sky, so to speak. Maybe, the next thing to tumble out of the blue will be the murderer himself."

"Then you still believe that I have told the truth, not lies as Vera thinks?"

"Certainly," Carney answered stoutly.

"I wish you could impress your conviction on Vera," Farnham said, with a sigh.

"I can try, at least. I think I shall drop down there now on the chance of finding her in." With this intention, Carney took his departure.

It was a wan and subdued Vera Daniloff who

presently received this visitor. There were dark shadows beneath the eyes, and those eyes themselves were dimmed a little as if from much weeping. Her voice, too, as she greeted the Doctor lacked something of its usual vivacious quality. Yet she spoke briskly, with an obvious attempt at her usual manner.

"You see me at my worst. All the night I have tried to think, but I do not think well. This morning, I am still miserable, I understand less than ever. I have tried to take a suspender, as you put it."

The psychologist, who was becoming accustomed to her vagaries in the use of idioms, guessed her meaning.

"To take a brace," he corrected.

Vera flirted her fingers disdainfully.

"Ah, yes. But brace or suspender, it is all the same. Anyhow, I am half-seas over."

"After a severe nervous strain," Carney explained sympathetically, "the reaction of alcohol is sometimes excessive. It would be better perhaps if you were to lie down for a little while, until the effect wears off."

The girl regarded him with rounded eyes.

"I shall soon understand nothing whatever," she declared mournfully. "Why do you talk of alcohol, of the effect wearing off?"

"You said, you were half-seas over—"

"Certainly. It is an idiom, is it not?"

"A familiar expression, without doubt, to indicate gently a state of drunkenness."

Vera uttered an ejaculation of distress.

"There is something wrong," she protested. "I am not drunk. It is only that I do not understand, that I am so confused, so puzzled."

A flash of illumination came to Carney.

"I suspect that you meant to describe yourself as being all at sea."

"It may be so. That expression is familiar also. And it is not the same as being half-seas over?"

"The phrases are not interchangeable," the psychologist answered, "although," he continued slyly, "both are sometimes applicable in a single case. But, jesting apart, my dear Miss Daniloff, you must try not to waste your strength in worry."

"What would you?" she demanded, with spirit. "It is enough to drive one mad. I lose my fortune — pouf — that is little. I lose a faithful servant, who is more than a servant, a faithful friend, killed because of his service for me. That loss is much — oh, so much! And, too, I lose more than these things, I lose infinitely more — something most precious, something of which I cannot speak, even to you, Doctor Carney."

The psychologist found himself acutely embarrassed before this outbreak of emotion. He could think of nothing comforting to say. In sheer

desperation, he took the saying that "Murder will out," as a text, and waxed almost eloquent, if a little incoherent, on this theme. He asserted with emphasis that the assassin of Andrieff would be found and haled before the bar of justice; he asserted with greater emphasis that the evidence against Farnham was wholly of a deceptive circumstantial sort, that innocence would be established. As he talked, the girl recovered her poise, but his assertions unaccompanied by proof failed to convince her. When, at last, he paused, she offered a single question, with a bitterness that denied any hope of a reply.

"If he is innocent as you say, why has Edward lied to me?" Carney remained silent, realizing the uselessness of any effort to prove her wrong. Presently, she went on speaking. "It is no longer a secret known only to myself, Edward, too, knows, I love him. All the world may know. And he loves me. It is this love that makes things so dreadful. I must trust the man I love. But how can I trust him when he tells me lies? It seems, then, that he cannot trust me. If he could, he would tell me the truth. The mystery of it is so horrible! I can understand nothing." She threw out her hands in a gesture of dismissal. "I am half-seas — all seas over!"

Carney offered no correction of her speech. He sat in distress, nibbling savagely at the bristles of

his mustache, staring commiseratingly through his thick lenses at the pain-stricken face of the girl, which even suffering could not rob of its loveliness. He was relieved at the sound of her voice when, after a short interval of silence she addressed him again, for now she spoke calmly in a matter-of-fact tone. But his relief vanished instantly as he grasped the purport of her words.

"I visited that policeman this morning," she announced. "He sent for me."

"You mean Maxwell?" the startled Doctor exclaimed.

"Yes. He let me have Andrieff's *Book of the Gospels*. He said it was of no use to the police. You know, he had promised me before that I might have it. It is there." She made a gesture toward a table against the wall, and Carney, following the direction of her hand, saw the thin volume in its binding of worn leather, which he recognized as having seen on the floor of Andrieff's chamber lying by the man's dead body. But his gaze returned swiftly to the girl as she uttered the next words.

"He showed me the knife with which Andrieff was killed. It was not pleasant to see it. He asked me many questions. He seemed to think that I should know the knife."

"And you did not recognize it?"

"How could I? I had never seen it before.

But the policeman was silly. He said that the knife had been in some place where I have been. I do not believe it, and so I told him. He is an Indian club—no," she corrected herself hastily, "I think you call it a dumb-bell. I told him that I am not on social terms with thieves and murderers, that I do not visit them."

"What did he say to that?"

"Not much. He grunted mostly. That is his way of being sarcastic, it is his form of clever repartee. Oh, yes, he said, too, that maybe I didn't know everything about everybody."

"He said nothing more?"

"Nothing more. Anyhow, he said enough—too much!"

"Yes," Carney agreed. He made his adieux hurriedly, and in great trepidation set forth for Farnham's apartment in West Seventy-second Street. There disappointment awaited him. The hallman declared that the architect was out, and, contrary to his usual custom, he had left no word as to when he would return.

CHAPTER XIII

AN ATTEMPTED SOLUTION

AT HOME, Carney relaxed in his favorite chair for a period of meditation, with the comfort of his pipe. He still found himself, however, somewhat depressed by a vague sense of loss. This he attributed to his disappointment in not having found Farnham. Nevertheless, it was borne in on him presently that some other lack weighed on his spirits. For a time, the nature of such lack eluded him as he cast about in vain questing for the object that thus impressed him without revealing itself. Then, of a sudden, realization of the fact flashed on him. The three cages with the parrots had been taken out of the living-room of Vera Daniloff's apartment. During his visit there, he had only subconsciously sensed the absence of the birds, but the effect of their disappearance had been sufficient to remain with him after his departure, and gradually to compel his attention, until now, finally, he became fully aware of the event. He wondered what had become of the parrots, and speculated futilely as to why the Russian girl should have thus banished them. Perhaps, he reflected, Vera, her nerves strained by

many trials, had suffered from the noise of the two that talked, from the gruesome spectacle presented by the third, which was dumb. The matter of the birds held Doctor Carney's attention for a considerable time, although he reached no satisfactory conclusion concerning the reason for their removal. But, once again, he was moved to consider the fact that these birds were somehow intimately associated with the murder of Andrieff. Perhaps, even, they were clues, if one but knew how to interpret them. It might be, indeed, that in the utterances of the two parrots that talked—so ceaselessly reiterated—lay a significance of prime importance, which, if understood, might go far toward solving the perplexities of the situation. It seemed certain that the two phrases that stood forth most prominently in the speech of the birds had been taught to them for a purpose. It seemed natural, too, to connect those two phrases. Carney was convinced that the words, "From the icon," and, "One hundred and thirty-two yards," belonged together, formed in fact a single statement. It was a statement utterly inconclusive of itself, a fragment of an unknown whole. It was impossible to divine the remainder of that statement; no amount of speculation, of guess work, could supply the missing words. It was at this point that Carney's thoughts fixed inevitably on the third parrot. It was reasonable to believe that

in the dumbness of the mutilated bird was the final barrier against any possible completion of the statement. It appeared obvious to him that the bird had been deprived of its power of speech for just that one purpose: to prevent anyone from knowing what the three parrots together had been taught to tell. Evidently, the silencing of one bird had been sufficient. "From the icon one hundred and thirty-two yards," was a blind direction. The utterance of the third parrot had been essential to make any meaning of value. Carney was compelled to admit that, had the third parrot a tongue, the combined words of the three birds might remain hopelessly baffling. The two that retained the ability to speak uttered only curt phrases. The talking of the other bird must have been equally limited, confined to a set phrase no longer than three or four words. It was probable that the mystery would have remained a mystery even had the dumb parrot power to cry out its part of the message. Nevertheless, there was always the possibility that the lost words might have contained something to make the revelation clear. That possibility dominated the doctor, and held him sorrowing over the hapless bird, innocent victim of criminal intrigues.

The psychologist considered also the question as to who might have been the perpetrator of the mutilation. Was the silencing of the parrot the

work of Andrieff or of his assassin? It was likely that one or the other had done this thing, since the appearance of the bird's wound showed that it had been recently inflicted at the time when the dead body of Andrieff was discovered. And along with this question went another, as to the precise motive for the act. It was plain that the motive must have been variously actuated according to the identity of the perpetrator of the deed. In either case, the motive must have been to restrain others from knowledge contained in the statement formulated by the three birds. But, if the mutilation was the act of Andrieff, it must have been with the intention of safe-guarding the trust confided to him by Vera Daniloff. If, however, the act was that of the murderer, it had been committed in order to aid somehow in the scheme of crime against the girl's property. In either case, then, Carney decided, the whole statement of the birds had a vital connection with the jewels themselves. It would seem that the words, "From the icon, one hundred and thirty-two yards," were concerned with the treasure in gems. They hinted of a precise direction—a direction leading to a certain spot. What spot? The hiding place of the jewels.

Carney experienced a new thrill of interest. His thoughts hitherto had never carried him quite to this point. He had regarded the property of Vera

Daniloff as lost, stolen. Now he began to think of it as merely hidden, as merely put away in some safe place, there to be found and duly restored to her. The idea absorbed him. Everyone, including the girl herself, had taken it for granted that the murderer, after the killing, made off with the jewels. But had he? Had the criminal shed the old man's blood in vain? Was it possible that Andrieff, fearful of pursuers that might despoil him, had secreted the parcel of precious stones in some place known only to himself? So far as Carney could remember, there was nothing in his letters to Vera to indicate that he carried the treasure on his person. It might be that he taught the parrots their message, not merely to amuse himself in solitude, but also as a means of getting information to his mistress in the event of his own death at the hands of his enemies. The supposition was hardly credible, yet it might hold the truth.

Out of the situation as he reviewed it, Carney discovered another possibility, one that disturbed him mightily. If the statement of the parrots was indeed concerning the gems and clear and complete, before the mutilation of the third bird, had the assassin learned from them information as to the hiding place of the gems? Had he, then, silenced the third parrot, thus rendering ineffectual the words of the other two, so that no other per-

son might share his knowledge of the hiding place? This done, had be gone forth to that unknown spot, there found the jewels, and afterward disappeared with his booty? If so, the treasure of Vera Daniloff was indeed lost. Following this line of reasoning, the only hope must lie in a possible difficulty to be encountered by the assassin in interpreting the statement of the parrots. It might be that the words of the birds, even including those of the third parrot, were not a wholly clear guide. It might be necessary for him to take time for the search. During the interval, another might search, perhaps more successfully, were he but possessed of the entire message. Thus, at last, the psychologist came back with new ardor to his familiar desire to know what words would be spoken by the third parrot, had it a tongue. With full knowledge Carney felt that he could go forth to the search in good heart, pitting his wits against those of the criminal. Even were the murderer successful in his quest, it might still be possible to learn of his identity, to track him, to hunt him down, to recover the spoils, to deliver him to justice. Carney was convinced that his theorizing along these lines was justified by the facts. There came to him again a memory of the face of the man who had so absorbed his attention on the elevated train; that man the sight of whom had already led him into strange by-ways of crime

and mystery, would doubtless lead him farther yet into the strange and dark places of life. Carney knew now that the face of the man had been the face of a murderer staring in horror at the scene of his blood-guiltiness. But there had been another emotion besides that of horror in the contorted face, the twisted lips, the glaring eyes. There had shown clearly an expression of thwarted rage. The killer had been baffled; the capital crime had not availed him. Now, Carney thought, he understood fully: This unknown man had slain Andrieff for the jewels of Vera Daniloff, but he had failed to secure the treasure. It might be that in the statement of the parrots he had a guide to their whereabouts, but that guide was insufficient.

Carney, in the pride of his own mental ability, dared believe that he, on the contrary, could find sufficient guidance in the words of the parrots. There might be time yet to worst the criminal at the game. But to do it he must have the full statement, must have knowledge of those words that the third parrot could not utter. Carney realized that he was helpless in the face of this lack. Here, intuitive perception and careful reasoning were alike at fault. There was the imperative need of more knowledge. Another clue must be sought, must be found. The psychologist sighed in despair. There was no other clue, nothing

tangible to offer a hint that might take the place of the third parrot's silence. He rested for a long time a prey to despair, his thoughts heavy and faltering. Nothing tangible — the words rang in his brain as a refrain of misery. And then, out of the darkness that lay so heavily on his spirit, there flashed a light. It was as if he saw within a flaming radiance a little volume in covers of worn leather, stamped with letters of strange form. And he recognized it. He had seen it twice: once, on the floor of Andrieff's room, beside the dead body; once, on the table in Vera Daniloff's living-room.

It was Andrieff's *Book of the Gospels*.

CHAPTER XIV

AN UNEXPECTED ENEMY

CARNEY sprang up from his chair, alert with a new energy of purpose, seized his hat, gloves and stick, and left the apartment. He turned west on issuing from the building, and made his way rapidly to the elevated station on Columbus Avenue. He had determined to test his recent inspiration by securing Andrieff's *Book of the Gospels* as soon as possible in order to search it for a possible suggestion of any sort. As the train carried him downtown, the psychologist admitted frankly to himself that his mission was actuated by absurdity. There was nothing plausible in the idea that the volume could offer a clue as to the identity of the murderer of Andrieff or as to the location of Vera Daniloff's jewels. Had there been distinguishable fingermarks other than those of the owner, the police would have availed themselves of these, and, in such event, they would have retained the book itself as evidence. For the rest, what shred of useful information could the book carry? Had there been anything in the nature of a memorandum, or writing of other sort between the leaves, it would not have escaped

police scrutiny. It would be impossible to learn anything from the text itself, since this would be no different from the narrative given by the four evangelists in his own English version of the New Testament. The appearance of the pages would be strange to him because the language was Russian, with which he was wholly unfamiliar except for the two brief phrases chattered by the parrots of Andrieff. No, it was unreasonable to expect any advantage from the *Book of the Gospels.* There was absolutely no justification of his sudden and keen interest in the volume, for his anxiety to be possessed of it. Nevertheless, the logical arguments put forth by his brain seemed ineffective against the eagerness aroused by his original impulse. His anxiety to lay hold of the book remained undiminished; even, it increased as he drew nearer to Vera Daniloff's apartment. After all, the Doctor realized, it was a matter of feeling that directed his course, and reason had little, if any, concern with it. The single support offered by his intellect was derived from the fact that this book was in truth the one tangible object to which he could turn for help. That no help was really to be expected from this source did not alter the fact that he could turn to nothing else for enlightenment.

At Vera Daniloff's apartment, the stolid peasant woman muttered gutturally in response to the Doc-

tor's request to see her mistress, and ushered him into the living-room. Somewhat to his chagrin, the girl was not present, but he was greeted pleasantly on his entrance by Boris Goshkoff, who rose from lounging on the couch, and advanced with friendly hand outstretched. The Doctor warmed under the radiant kindliness of the actor's manner. Goshkoff explained that their hostess was absent from the apartment but was expected to return very soon. He expressed himself as gratified that the company of the newcomer would relieve the tedium of waiting. As he seated himself, Carney briefly stated the cause of his call. He had no hesitation in speaking candidly to Goshkoff, since the young man was, he knew, fully acquainted with all the circumstances of the case. This was to be expected from his intimacy with the girl, but, beyond that, the matter was public property, since the murder of Andrieff and the supposed theft of the jewels had been thoroughly exploited in the newspapers. While speaking, Carney glanced about the room and made sure that the cages of the parrots had been removed. He spoke of it to the Russian.

"Yes," Goshkoff answered, "they were banished to the kitchen some days ago, and even there, they are not encouraged. I believe old Olga keeps all three cages shrouded. She's not the sort to be nervous, but those two parrots that talk

are too much for any one's nerves. I doubt if they would be popular even in a ship's forecastle."

"And Olga covers the cage of the third parrot also?" the Doctor exclaimed.

Goshkoff nodded.

"As a matter of fact," he declared, "I don't blame her. That dumb brute was the worst of the three." His expressive face showed how repellent to him was mere thought of the mutilated creature. "It gave one a creepy feeling to see the stump of a tongue, and the poor thing with its beak strained open all the time, as if it were trying to say something. I urged Miss Daniloff to get the parrots out of sight and hearing, and at last she did. She admitted that they troubled her, too—naturally enough, when one thinks of the associations."

"Yes," Doctor Carney agreed. "It was the third parrot that bothered me. That wretched bird interested me particularly because it was actually the thing that led me to the place where Andrieff was murdered. Then, too, the sight of it there in the room that day with the fresh wound showing added to the horror of the whole scene. Whenever I saw it here, it recalled the tragedy too vividly. I'm glad it's out of sight."

"But not out of mind," Goshkoff commented grimly. "Here we sit and talk of it. Dumb though it is, it cries out in our thoughts."

Carney nodded.

"It is in my thoughts pretty steadily. I am forever wondering what that bird would say, were its power of speech restored."

The Russian regarded the psychologist curiously. But his voice when he spoke was listless, without trace of interest.

"Whatever it might be, the words would be only some nonsense taught by that old sailor. We may be sure of that from the fact that the other two parrots do nothing but make a din by shouting names and meaningless words. The third parrot must have done the same."

"But, if you are right," the Doctor objected, "why should anyone bother to cut out the bird's tongue?"

Goshkoff hesitated for a little, then shook his head doubtfully.

"It is all a puzzle, of course. But I think it likely that the act was committed in a spirit of mere wanton cruelty. Perhaps Andrieff himself cut off the bird's tongue. He may have grown to dislike it for some reason. It may be that he was angered by its refusal to learn what he wished it to say."

"I cannot believe in such an explanation."

"Or it may have been the work of some other lodger in the building," Goshkoff continued suavely, "who was bothered by the noise of the birds,

and, when he found Andrieff deaf to protest, decided to take the remedy into his own hands."

"But why should he limit the mutilation to just one of the three parrots?"

"He may have been interrupted, or he may have thought that this treatment of a single one might be sufficient to bring Andrieff to terms. The whole affair gives opportunity for speculation, but it is foolish to exaggerate the importance of it."

"It may be foolish, as you say," Doctor Carney declared, and the little patches of hectic color high on his cheeks were very bright indeed, "but, again, it may not be so foolish to believe that there was in fact something of peculiar significance in the utterance of the third parrot. To believe that affords the simplest possible solution of all the facts as we know them. It is, therefore," he continued didactically, "scientifically correct to accept this as a working hypothesis. For my own part, I'm free to confess that I'd give a good deal to know the words that bird once spoke, and can speak no more." His interest in the matter betrayed the Doctor into a frankness that he had by no means intended with this stranger. "The phrases uttered by the other parrot are definite and seem to carry a meaning of their own, though that meaning is incomplete. I am convinced that the meaning might have been made clear by the addition of the third parrot's phrase. It appears

to me likely that the joined phrases of all three parrots contain something of vital significance, something to do with the mystery in which are involved both the murder of Andrieff, and the loss of Miss Daniloff's jewels."

Goshkoff, who had been reclining in an attitude of elegant ease, suddenly sat upright. His face hardened a little, and his brows drew into a frown. His cultivated voice was musical as always, but in it now sounded slightly a metallic quality.

"You make mountains of mole hills, my dear Doctor," he exclaimed and a gentle laughter followed the words. "I fancy that your imagination has been overstimulated by your association with events of a sort quite apart from your usual routine of life. Your enthusiasm is natural enough, but it seems hardly possible to justify it by reason. I suspect that you have thought too much of this mystery, which, when all is said and done, is a simple matter of a sordid theft which involved murder. It would, perhaps, be wise of you to turn your attention to other things and leave the police, whose duty it is, to deal with crime." There was a note of scorn in the Russian's voice that rasped Carney's nerves, and moved him to quick anger. Prudence, however, halted the retort that rose to his lips. He was acutely aware that he had been indiscreet, that he had carelessly revealed to an unsympathetic listener the secret

thought that to him had seemed of possibly vital importance. His impulsive confidence had met contemptuous disdain. He realized that the rebuke was not wholly unmerited, but such realization made it none the less unpleasant. His anger grew, but he controlled it by an effort of will. He would not let this sneering foreigner perceive the extent of his disturbance. So he held the mounting wrath in leash, sitting in silence, with his eyes lowered. And, little by little, as he repressed the first emotion, that emotion changed into another. His choleric mood died, and in its stead came a very lively dislike for the man who sat opposite him, this exile from a far land with the mobile face and the cultured voice, who so flippantly dismissed from consideration the murder of a faithful old man and the loss of fortune that had thus left in poverty an orphaned girl. And that girl, Carney made sure, was one to whom this actor had paid assiduous court. Now, in his silky way, this fellow declared that such crimes were merely matters to be left to the police. The psychologist felt, at least for the moment, that he heartily detested Boris Goshkoff. He wished that Vera might come quickly. He was fearful of further conversation with his vis-à-vis.

Come she did, almost at once, and her warm greeting served to soothe the irritated nerves of Doctor Carney. But again he wondered over the

change wrought in the girl as she laughingly chattered in Russian for a few moments with Goshkoff. An added color showed in her cheeks, and her blue eyes sparkled with gaiety. The watcher realized that Vera Daniloff at home among friends and kindred must indeed have been another girl, quite different from the one with whom he was familiar here in an alien land, among strangers, and those not of her own race. And still again he was compelled to wonder if perhaps, after all, there was something in the personality of the actor that quickened her, some magnetism that was subtly effective in provoking a pleasurable excitement. The psychologist, though he had been so recently angered by the fellow, was compelled, nevertheless, to acknowledge the charm of the man. So, the psychologist was inclined to believe that Vera was attracted possibly more than she herself appreciated by her compatriot, in spite of the fact that she was in love with Farnham.

Presently, the girl turned to Carney, and her smile of deprecation was wistful as she spoke.

"You must forgive, dear Doctor. It is that I cannot resist the lure of my own language."

"Oh, as to that, I have come here tonight to get Russian," was the whimsical reply. With this introduction, he explained his wish to take away Andrieff's *Book of the Gospels,* in order to make a thorough examination of it. He had no hesita-

tion in making his request before Goshkoff, since he had already been so indiscreet that this further revelation of his purpose was rendered unimportant. Vera was plainly glad to grant his request, though she could not believe that any information would come from the worn old volume which she immediately put in his hands. As the Doctor slipped the book into his coat pocket, the girl addressed him in a tone of gentle raillery.

"Aha! then, it is that you are a sloth."

Carney resented the accusation, which was, in truth, wholly unjustified by the activity both of mind and body that had always characterized him.

"I am not really lazy," he declared, "although, of course, I may seem so to you who only see me sitting here idly."

"But I have never thought of you as lazy," Vera exclaimed in bewilderment.

"You called me a sloth," the doctor retorted, "the animal universally known as the symbol of utter laziness."

"No, no! I never called you an animal of any sort. I could not be so rude! I said you were a sloth—in your language that means one who goes hot-dog on the trail of a criminal."

The Doctor shook his head in puzzlement, while Goshkoff chuckled softly.

"Hot-dog?" the psychologist repeated feebly. Vera nodded.

"Yes. It is, I believe, the national dish of the aborigines in your country, of the red men. They feast on dogs. And I observe that the dish is common among the whites. I often see signs: 'Hot-dogs.'"

"That dish comes from Germany, not from our Indians," Carney explained. "The food is not necessarily dog meat."

"Anyhow," Vera insisted, "I have seen the expression about a sloth hot-dog on the trail. It was not very clear to me about the hot-dog, but I gathered the general meaning. You know I am ambitious to use such colloquial expressions."

"I am inclined to suspect," the psychologist ventured, "that you have made two mistakes in repeating the phrase."

"Oh, I am so ashamed!" the girl exclaimed, with genuine dismay. "I am fearful lest my language never become idiotic—no, idiomatic. Please, Doctor, tell me these mistakes."

"For 'hot-dog' it is necessary to substitute 'hot-foot,' which implies a rapid pace. And, instead of 'sloth,' the word should be 'sleuth.' You meant to call me a sleuth, that is to say, a detective. Even so, however, the accusation is unfair to me. I am not, either by nature or habit, a trailer of criminals. But, somehow, I have become involved in a mystery, and that mystery holds me. I would do anything, everything pos-

sible to solve it. It is not reasonable to expect help from Andrieff's *Book of the Gospels*. I am taking it only because it is something tangible associated with the crime, and for that reason it should be scrutinized with every care."

"Always, my best wishes for your success go with you," the Russian girl said softly and there was a glow of grateful friendliness in her eyes, and the warmth of genuine feeling in her handclasp.

Goshkoff stood up to bow as Carney said farewell.

"And I, too, wish you success, my dear Doctor," he said. The musical tones of the Russian actor still sounded in Carney's ears, as he went the length of the hallway to let himself out of the apartment. At the door into the hall, he lingered for a moment, listening. For there came to him from the kitchen down the passageway, the cries of the parrots, faintly heard through the shut door. He distinguished the phrases of first one bird and then the other:

"S' ikonee."

"Sto tridtsat' dva arshina."

And now he was able to translate the rough cries:

"From the icon."

"One hundred and thirty-two yards."

The phrases were repeated. It seemed to the listener that there was a sinister significance in the

monotonous reiteration of these words by the birds. For first one of them uttered its set form of speech, then immediately the other in its turn. But afterward, there followed always an interval of silence. It was as if they waited for another voice, which came not. Did they wait, and wait in vain, for the voice of the third parrot?

CHAPTER XV

AN ATTEMPTED MURDER

GARNEY walked over to Sixth Avenue, where he took the elevated, following his usual custom. He still felt a measure of irritation from the remarks of Goshkoff, but this was offset to a considerable extent through the impressions made on him by the sympathetic friendliness of Vera Daniloff. He acknowledged to himself that his idea as to aid in solving the mystery from Andrieff's *Book of the Gospels* was fantastic, deserving the sneers of Goshkoff. Yet, while he acknowledged this, he experienced a great satisfaction in his possession of the volume. Absurd it might be; nevertheless, the presence of the book in his pocket comforted him in an insidious fashion of its own, which he was at a loss to explain rationally. He felt, somehow, as if he had found a new and vital contact with the crime. The Doctor smiled sardonically over the emotion of enthusiasm that welled within him.

"I believe," he meditated, "that I am becoming sensitive—psychic in the most adominable sense of the word. Instead of being influenced wholly by conclusions drawn from careful reason-

ing, I am becoming the prey of subtle impressions from persons and from things. I believe in Farnham's innocence in spite of overwhelming evidence against him. By keeping silent, I have actually made myself his accomplice. And I go to and fro filled with yearning to know the lost words of a dumb parrot. Probably, those words were only silly prattle, but I yearn none the less. And, now, I am all agog over Andrieff's book. I can reasonably expect nothing from it, but I do expect. Yes, I show symptoms of development along psychic lines. It's lucky no one knows of it but myself. I must watch out, or I'll be falling into a trance, and talking in a treble with Little Eva as a control."

The Doctor was chuckling over this conceit of himself as he left the train at the Eighty-sixth Street station. He descended the stairs, and continued eastward on the way to his apartment by the park. He was still amusedly reflecting on the phases of his psychic development, and gave no heed to his surroundings. The street was deserted to all appearance, as his eyes roved idly over the stretch of pavement before him. His ears did not catch the softly slithering footsteps of two men, who had slipped out of Columbus Avenue behind him, and were now following him at a distance of a few rods. Moreover, his careless glance ahead failed to catch the figure of a man half

way down the block in front of him, a tall, somewhat shabby figure, loitering by an areaway within the shadow of the high steps of the house. As Carney approached, and while he was still some distance away, the lurking man moved stealthily from his post into the deeper darkness of the basement entrance. Still absorbed in his thoughts, Carney went forward at a leisurely pace, quite oblivious of the fact that any other persons were close at hand. Thus unconscious of externals, he approached the house within the shadow of which the tall, shabby figure had hidden itself, and behind him came the two men who had followed him from Columbus Avenue. In the light of the street lamps, these were revealed as short and stocky of build, and they, too, were shabby in their dress. They looked, indeed, rough fellows with alien faces, and there was undoubtedly something sinister in the manner of their movement. They went stealthily as if in secret pursuit of the man before them. It was significant that they exchanged no words between themselves, that they walked noiselessly, a little way apart, and that presently they quickened their speed as if with the purpose of overtaking their victim at a predetermined spot. It was evident that such spot was directly opposite the areaway in which the other man was concealed.

Suddenly, the two men darted forward, the arm

of one rose and fell swiftly. But the blow of the blackjack failed of its full effect on the object of this vicious attack. For that matter, it seemed that the psychic sensibility of Carney over which he had been amused, intervened in his behalf, was in fact the means of saving him from serious injury, perhaps from death. As the blow fell, he felt the menace of the danger, though neither eyes nor ears gave warning. Instinctively, he whirled and dodged, too late to avoid the stroke entirely, but in time to escape the brunt of it. The weapon crashed glancingly on his skull and shoulders. With a gasping cry of pain, he went down, and lay motionless, stunned. The man who had struck muttered unintelligibly to his companion, and stooped over the prostrate form, his arm raised in readiness for a second blow.

Before that blow could fall, there came an interruption. A form leaped out of the darkness of the areaway, and a well-placed blow on the jaw of the bending footpad, sent the fellow sprawling in the gutter. His companion, terrified by the unexpected onslaught, set off running toward Columbus Avenue. He was followed by the other who scrambled to his feet, and scurried away without a backward glance. The two had been willing enough to assault one who was unwarned and helpless: they had no stomach for battle.

The rescuer made no effort to pursue the flee-

ing men. Instead, he hurried to attend on the victim of the attack, who was still lying as he had fallen on the sidewalk, but now was groaning feebly. As the tall man bent over, he perceived a slight movement of the body, and guessed that with returning consciousness there was an instinctive effort to get up. He knelt and with an arm passed under the shoulders raised Carney to a sitting posture. The eyes of the psychologist opened, and he blinked dazedly upward at the other's face, through the thick lenses of his glasses, which remained unbroken from the fall and unmoved from their accustomed position on the bridge of the thin nose.

"You'll be all right in a few moments," the tall, shabby man said encouragingly. "The way you dodged saved you from the full effect of the blow."

"Why, it's Farnham!" the Doctor exclaimed. Astonishment over the unexpectedness of the architect's presence in this emergency helped to clear his brain of the confusion caused by the blow on his head. He rallied his strength, and straightened so that he sat unsupported by the other's arm, which, however, still retained its protective position. "How did you come here? Someone attacked me. I think there were two men. Where are they? Did you see them? Highway robbery!" he moved his left arm, but the pain in his

shoulder elicited a groan, and he desisted from the effort. An attempt with the other arm caused him no suffering, and an exploring hand to his pockets quickly convinced him that his money and watch were untouched.

Farnham, who understood the significance of his friend's movements, hastened to reassure him.

"The fellows got nothing. I was waiting here for you, and was in time to drive them off. But explanations can wait. They gave you a nasty crack on the head, and the sooner it's attended to the better. Do you think you are able to get up and to walk the little way to your place? There's no cab in sight. Let's try it, anyhow."

"Oh, I can manage all right," Carney declared with spirit.

Nevertheless, it was with some difficulty that he managed to get to his feet, and then to stand dizzily, swaying a little, within the firm hold of the younger man.

"Take it easy," Farnham counseled. "A rap like that leaves one a little shaky."

"I'll try it now," the psychologist said presently. "Let's go."

The progress of the two was slow, painfully slow at the outset, for the little man's head throbbed with excruciating pain, and there was a haze before his eyes, so that he felt utterly dependent on his companion, not only for support,

but also for guidance. As they advanced, however, the task of movement lightened little by little, and by the time they reached the apartment house, he was stepping firmly enough, and his vision had cleared. Indeed, the condition of the injured man had so improved that Farnham deemed it safe to withdraw the aid of his arm, in order to prevent remark by the attendant in the building. For that matter, there was nothing about the Doctor's appearance sufficiently conspicuous to attract attention in the dimly lighted entrance hall and elevator. There was a little dust on his clothes, but the blood from his wound was matted in the hair, so as to be hardly perceptible beneath the shading brim of the soft hat. It was with almost his usual briskness that the psychologist stepped from the elevator at his floor, and unlocked his apartment.

Farnham asserted authority, with the explanation that his experience in the war enabled him to give adequate treatment. He installed the doctor on a couch, examined the wound, which he pronounced merely an abrasion of the scalp, without injury to the skull, and then proceeded to wash it and to apply antiseptics and bandages secured from Carney's medicine chest. At the end, Carney found himself not much the worse for his experience, except for an abominable headache. He refused to permit Farnham any ministration to the injured shoulder, declaring that the pain was

slight, and that he himself would attend to it later. He insisted, too, on leaving the couch for an easy chair, where he installed himself comfortably with a pipe, his bandaged head with its turbanlike effect giving him a somewhat ludicrous Oriental aspect. His sole concession was to join Farnham in a rather stiff brandy peg. Under the influence of the stimulant, his face, which had been pale, took on its usual color, and the flush high on the cheeks deepened a little as he sat alternately puffing at the pipe and nibbling at the bristles of his mustache.

"Now tell me all about it," he demanded.

Farnham complied with a brief account of the whole affair as he had seen it and of his own action. Carney uttered his thanks quietly but with a sincerity of tone that left no doubt as to his gratitude. Then a sudden curiosity assailed him.

"How did you happen to be right on the spot like that?" he questioned. "It was providential. They might have killed me."

At the question, Farnham's face hardened. He spoke bitterly.

"I was hiding there. To explain, I must tell you the tale of my troubles. Anyhow, it was for this that I wished to see you tonight. But I was afraid to go to your apartment. I meant to waylay you on your coming out or going in, and take you into the park for a talk—the last one."

"The last one?" Carney repeated in bewilderment.

"Yes, the last one, at least for a time," was the reply. "Don't you notice anything queer about my appearance?"

The psychologist regarded the speaker more closely than hitherto. Then he betrayed evidences of embarrassment.

"Why, it may be—that is to say, your clothing is—um—a bit rough, so to speak."

Farnham laughed shortly.

"These clothes," he explained, "are the worst I could dig out of my wardrobe. They are meant as a disguise. For the same reason, I stooped more than usual, and walked with a shamble, and hid in an areaway."

"Good grief!" Carney exclaimed. He sat upright in his chair, and thrust his pipe forward in a gesture of inquiry. "Do you mean that——?"

"Yes." Farnham nodded gloomily. "Practically, though not technically, I'm a fugitive from justice. To tell the truth, I got scared—that is, more scared than I have been before. You see, the only hope I have is in the discovery of some evidence pointing to another person as guilty of the murder of Andrieff. At present, all the evidence points to me. And, I believe, that, in the usual course of things, the person first accused is under a serious handicap from that very fact. The

efforts of the prosecution are concentrated against him. There is no further hunt for another victim. So, I wish to avoid arrest. I know that flight, of itself, condemns me, but I have no choice. I know, too, that there may never come any development in the case to clear me. I must take that risk—it is the lesser of two evils."

"Something has happened to alarm you?"

"Yes. My studio was searched during my absence yesterday. The sheath of the knife with which Andrieff was killed was carried off. The work was done skillfully, but I discovered traces of it that left no room for doubt as to the facts. I gathered a few valuables, which I put in a valise, now in the checking-room at the Grand Central station. I put on these old clothes as the best I could do in the way of a disguise. If I had the art of that Russian actor, Goshkoff, I suppose I could alter my appearance so as to walk the streets unchallenged with all the detectives on the lookout for me. But I couldn't manage so much as a false mustache: I probably would be arrested by the first intelligent officer I met as a suspicious person. My only resource is to get away and hide in some obscure spot. I delayed departure only in order to see you again."

"It is a pity—it seems very dreadful," Carney declared, "but it may be that disappearance for a time is advisable—and, if I may ask—have

you decided on your place of retreat?"

"I have a choice of two locations, and both of them have the advantage of being hardly known at all in connection with myself. It would be difficult for the police to learn of my whereabouts. One is a shack high up on a mountain in Ulster County. I bought it from an artist who was hard up. You know, there is a colony of painters with Woodstock as a center. I have only been there once, and no one in the neighborhood knows me."

"And the other refuge?"

"A little bungalow on the Menunketisic River."

"I suppose you know where that is," the Doctor said dryly, as Farnham paused, "I certainly don't. It sounds like a good hiding place."

"I trust it may prove so," was the answer, given with a wan smile, "for I have almost decided in favor of it. The river empties into Long Island Sound, and the bungalow is only a few miles from the mouth. I have gone there often for a little relaxation, but I have not joined in the social activities of the resorts along the shore of the Sound, and I believe that I could conceal my identity there easily enough. The bungalow offers the advantage of being quickly and easily reached, either by train or by boat."

"Just where is this river?" the doctor asked.

"In Connecticut, something more than half way from New Haven to New London."

"Ha!" the psychologist ejaculated. "Connecticut, eh? Andrieff went to Connecticut. Now, that's a bit curious—the coincidence, you know. Do you know a little town named Clinton, somewhere along the shore?"

"Yes," the architect answered without interest. "The bungalow lies only a few miles from it."

"Ha!" Carney ejaculated a second time, even more vigorously than before. Then he remained silent, pondering deeply. At last, he voiced another question. "How does one get from Clinton to your bungalow?"

"The road running east from the village branches at the end of the main street, and the northern branch goes to the river. The bungalow is only a little way to the south along the river bank."

"On the west bank of the stream?" Farnham nodded assent. "There are other bungalows?"

"No; only some farm houses further up the stream." Then, suddenly, Farnham straightened in his chair. "But why do you ask?" he demanded. "Surely, you don't intend to visit me there. You mustn't—it would be too dangerous. It is likely the police will keep an eye on you in the hope of getting some trace of me."

Doctor Carney nodded in agreement, but he carefully refrained from any direct assurance. Instead, he said quietly:

"I think you would be wise to decide on the bungalow as a hiding place. It is, as you have said, easy of access, while being sufficiently remote for the purpose of retirement."

"I shall go there, then," Farnham declared, "and I shall start by the first train, without returning to the studio. Of course, while I am there, I may be able to get some information from the newspapers, but I shall also ask your help in keeping me informed as to anything of importance that happens here."

"By letter?"

"By letter, addressed to Clinton, Connecticut. I shall use the name, Henry Parker. Will you make a note of it?"

The psychologist waved aside the suggestion, for he prided himself on his memory.

"I shall remember it," he asserted with conviction.

But another motive besides pride in his memory actuated his disdain over the idea of writing down a memorandum. Again an impulse was surging in him. It had come wholly unheralded; it was perhaps altogether unjustifiable by reason, but it dominated him none the less. He had already determined that he, too, must journey into Connecticut, along the shore of the Sound. Andrieff had gone to Clinton. Well, then, he also would go to Clinton. In that region, and there only, as

it seemed to him in his new enthusiasm, he might chance upon something tangible that had to do with the mystery. The Doctor respected Farnham's fears, and, when presently they parted, it was without any hint on his part to the young man as to the project which now engrossed him.

CHAPTER XVI

AT HEADQUARTERS

AFTER the departure of Farnham, Carney had scant thought for the predicament in which the architect found himself. The whole attention of the psychologist now was centered on the idea that had come to him with the suddenness and the convincingness of a real inspiration. He was absorbed in speculations as to the possibilities of discovery in connection with the mystery that might be afforded by investigations on the spot at Clinton. Certainly, there might be traces of a helpful sort still to be found in the shack on the shore of the Sound whither Andrieff had resorted in order to throw pursuers off his track. Moreover, there was Andrieff's brother, in whom, doubtless, the old sailor had confided. The Doctor was ashamed of his own lack in not having hitherto given heed to this field of operations. He decided that within a few days he would make a journey into that region where Andrieff had hidden himself. As he was getting ready for bed, Carney felt the weight of the *Book of the Gospels* in his coat-pocket, but he gave the volume no attention beyond pulling it out and laying it on the

top of a low bookcase. It did occur to him that he was treating this bit of tangible evidence rather shabbily, after his impetuous anxiety to be possessed of it, but he put the thought aside in the newer interest aroused by his projected exploration in the Clinton neighborhood. His head was still aching severely, and he looked forward with dismay to a sleepless, restless night of suffering.

"However," he mused stoically, "I shall concentrate my mind on the various problems offered by this affair, and thus by the exercise of clear thinking I may make the night a profitable one." With this resolve, he put out the light, and got into bed, where he instantly fell fast asleep. It is true that his slumber was troubled, for the ache of his wound was persistent. He was tormented with nightmares, in which footpads and assassins menaced him at every turn. Nevertheless, he awoke refreshed. The throbbing pain of the wound had ceased, and only the inevitable soreness remained. Of the nightmare, he had only a single recollection, and this was in fact a quickening of his own memory as to something that had actually occurred. He recalled that, in every instance, the face of footpad or assassin had been characterized by Slavic features. It was brought to his remembrance that in the adventure of the evening, even as he whirled only to be struck down by the black-

jack, he had caught a glimpse of his assailant's face, and he knew now that it was the face of a Russian.

The fact impressed Carney mightily. It was quite possible, of course, that a holdup man in the streets of New York might be of any nationality. Still, he was inclined to the opinion that the chances were greatly against such acts of violence being undertaken by this particular nationality. The suspicion grew in him that the attack on him had been directed against his life rather than against his property; that the purpose of his assailants had been murder rather than merely robbery. The possibility thrilled Carney anew. He had already experienced many thrills from unaccustomed voyaging into the dark ways of crime, but this final thrill shook him as no other had. He was, indeed, all tremulous with excitement, and it was an excitement altogether pleasurable. He had already derived keen enjoyment from the novelty of his experiences. The drab fabric of his life, in which stood forth only the dun pattern woven by mental questings, had been suddenly made brilliant, shot through with the crimson flares of crime. And to these had been added the softer and more beautiful radiance from new human interest, his regard for the young man whom he believed to be unjustly suspected, and for the girl, who suffered not only the loss of her fortune, but

also the threatened loss of her heart's desire. And now, at last, was added this fiery brilliance of his own personal peril. He was prone to believe that his life was actually threatened. He felt that he should be terrified. On the contrary, he fairly gloated over the fact. Under the menace of death he felt himself alive as never before. He was not greatly disconcerted by the fact that he found it difficult to explain why anyone should seek to destroy him. It satisfied him to believe that his connection with the murder of Andrieff was, in some mysterious fashion, responsible. It might well be, he argued, that his activities had incurred the enmity of desperate men. It might be, even, that the man he believed to be the assassin, whom he had watched in the elevated train, whom he hoped eventually to track down, had noted him, had learned his identity, had feared him, and had marked him for slaughter. The little psychologist, full of a new joy of life, since death loomed as a background, swelled with importance. He reflected, however, that it would be prudent to go armed. He possessed a revolver and an automatic, in spite of the Sullivan law, and he was moderately skilled in the use of them. It occurred to him that it would be wise to obtain a permit for the bearing of a weapon. He could undoubtedly obtain this by application to his friend at headquarters, Deputy Commissioner Maxwell. In ad-

dition, an interview with that official might provide him with important information. He would be able perhaps to learn definitely as to the nature of the evidence against Farnham on which the police were acting. It did not occur to him just then that the police might be more ready to obtain information than to give it.

Immediately after breakfast, Carney prepared to sally forth. He put on his hat gingerly by reason of the scalp wound and somewhat insecurely by reason of the bandage. He regarded the effect in the mirror with misgiving.

"A turban would be more becoming and more comfortable under the circumstances," he reflected, "but I suppose it would attract even more attention. At least, I'll get a fresh bandage put on by the doctor, downstairs." This he did, and afterward traveled downtown, and duly presented himself in the office of the deputy inspector.

"Too much brains," Maxwell declared, grinning as he shook hands with his visitor and eyed the bandage; "they're beginning to bust out."

Carney smiled faintly at this vulgar form of humor. At least, it served to introduce the subject on which he had come. He briefly related the incident of the attack on him, though without revealing his belief in a murderous intent. He concluded by announcing his wish to obtain a permit for the carrying of a weapon.

Maxwell, from the vantage of his burly bulk, surveyed the little man patronizingly.

"Sure," he vouchsafed, "I'll fix it for you. You're the sort that ought to carry a gun, and usually doesn't. . . . . You haven't caught sight yet of that assassin you're looking for, have you? Anyhow, it doesn't matter. The department has evidence enough for an arrest."

"You mean, you have discovered the identity of the fellow?" Doctor Carney exclaimed, with a fine assumption of excitement.

"Not of that fellow you saw," Maxwell retorted dryly. "Our quarry is of quite a different sort."

"Who is it, then?"

"If I tell you," the Deputy Inspector answered, "you must regard the information as strictly confidential. We do not wish any news of this to leak out just yet. The person toward whom the evidence points is that young architect chap, Edward Farnham, who was a member of your party the day you discovered the murder of Andrieff."

The Doctor, although prepared for this announcement, deemed it discreet to manifest surprise, and he uttered an incredulous ejaculation.

"Farnham! Why, the idea is preposterous. He's not the type to be guilty of such a crime."

Maxwell sniffed.

"Your contact with crime hasn't been extensive,

or you wouldn't say that. The brand of Cain on the forehead gives punch to the Bible story, but it is unfortunately not visible on the murderers for whom we hunt. Assassins are a mixed lot. Some are roughnecks, and some are gentlemen of breeding and education. One wholesale murderer whom I knew, who killed ruthlessly for a few paltry dollars of insurance money, was a small man, with a warm handclasp and kindly eyes and soft, pleasant voice. His manner was sympathetic and charming — everybody liked him. No, the personality of the accused counts for little, or nothing, in the face of evidence against him."

"But, surely, there is no evidence against Farnham," the psychologist objected.

"That's where you're wrong. There is evidence aplenty against him, and it's of a sort that's likely to send him to the chair."

Again Carney uttered an ejaculation, and this time it was sincere, an expression of horrified dismay at such bald announcement of his friend's peril.

"It seems impossible," he faltered. Then he continued, more stoutly: "It is impossible. I know the man, and I know that he could not commit a crime so brutal, so sordid, so cold-blooded."

Maxwell nodded understandingly.

"I should feel the same way about it," he admitted. "Farnham appears a likable and whole-

some lad. But feelings don't alter facts in murder cases. It's the evidence that counts, and we have it against him, and the motive, too. But I won't go into that. I've sent out for him, though he won't be put under arrest at this time perhaps. I'll have him down here for a grilling. Believe me, Doc, it'll take some squirming for him to wriggle out of the mess. I'm free to confess, I shouldn't have suspected him if it hadn't been for an anonymous note that started us on the trail."

"An anonymous note!" the psychologist repeated contemptuously, to mask his surprise over this unexpected development. "But, surely, a communication of that sort is something to be disregarded utterly."

"In highfalutin codes of honorable conduct, yes," the official agreed with tolerant good humor. "But in police circles the case is different. There are all sorts of reasons why persons wish to reveal the guilt of other persons, and there are all sorts of reasons, too, why they may wish to remain unknown in connection with the information they give. So, the anonymous letter, usually in a disguised handwriting, is the commonest expedient. This letter to the department was an illiterate scrawl, so illiterate, in fact, that I suspect the writer to be well educated."

"What did it say?"

"Warned us to watch Farnham, and directly

accused him of having murdered Andrieff."

"But such a charge is not evidence."

"That was not all. The writer asserted that the knife with which the murder was committed belonged to Farnham. It was further stated that his presence in the house where Andrieff lodged in the afternoon of the day preceding the discovery of the body by you could be proved by the testimony of a woman tenant in the building, who lived at the back, up one flight."

"But," Carney objected, "you had already, of course, questioned her."

"Yes, and got nothing from her. Those foreigners are never anxious to tell all they know to the police, and we were easy with her, having no suspicion that she could tell more than she did. When we had her up again, we dragged the story out of her. She'll swear that Farnham was in the house the day of the murder. By the way, you and Miss Daniloff should have included in your account of what happened the fact that this woman recognized Farnham when he was with you and spoke of his having been there the day before."

"But he denied it," Carney stammered. "Naturally, I believed him, and gave her no credence." He could not bring himself to include Miss Daniloff as also disbelieving the woman, since he knew that she regarded Farnham's denial to the woman as a lie.

"I suppose you would naturally believe him rather than the woman," Maxwell conceded a little wearily. "I might myself, if it weren't for the hard schooling I have received in my work here. To sum it up, it looks to me as if this young fellow was in a bad way. We shall be able to fix the ownership of the knife on him. That'll be a mighty hard thing for him to explain."

Abruptly, the deputy inspector changed his tone, and spoke less gruffly. "You like the chap, don't you, Doctor?"

"Farnham? Yes. I both like him and trust him." The response was made with the earnestness of deep feeling.

There was sympathy in the penetrating glance of the official.

"I'm inclined to like him, too," he said. "But I can't trust him — my position here forbids. And as for the liking, mine can't help him, nor can yours, for that matter, unless ——"

"Unless?" the psychologist prompted, after a vain wait for Maxwell to conclude the sentence.

"—— unless you get busy and recognize and locate your chap of the elevated train. My own opinion is, that's quite impossible. But, impossible or not, it seems the only chance in Farnham's favor."

CHAPTER XVII

WHAT THE DOCTOR FOUND

DOCTOR CARNEY, after his interview with Maxwell, was more than ever impressed with the seriousness of Farnham's position. He thoroughly agreed with the blunt statement of the deputy inspector, to the effect that the young man could be saved from prosecution for the murder of Andrieff only by prompt discovery of another person as actually the assassin. More than ever now, the psychologist was eager to pursue his investigations in the Sound region whither Andrieff had fled for concealment from his enemies. Carney would have started for Clinton that very day, had it not been for an imperative engagement with his lawyer. He determined, however, to take his departure the following morning. He had no particular plan of action in mind. Indeed, he could not formulate any reasonable hope of success from his mission. But he was none the less keen for the undertaking, and hope, unsupported by reason, mounted high in his breast. The sole definite part of his project was to hunt out Farnham at once and make that young man a party in the work of searching for any possible clues.

Impatience beset the psychologist over the enforced delay in getting to work along the lines of his new enthusiasm. Then, as he rambled restlessly about the living-room, his eyes chanced to fall on the *Book of the Gospels,* which had lain disregarded on the bookcase, where he had placed it the night before. His conscience pricked him a little for such complete neglect of the object, over which so recently he had been greatly excited, for the possession of which he had been so anxious, to the examination of which he had looked forward so expectantly. Truth to tell, he was no little ashamed of his varying moods. "Unstable as water," he muttered. In a spirit of compunction over his neglect, rather than with any anticipation now of finding here help toward solution of the mystery, Carney took the book and sat down to study it. But, as he held it in his lap unopened, during a meditative period of inactivity, he found his interest reviving little by little, slowly perhaps, yet powerfully. After all, he was holding there something tangible that had been intimately associated with the crime. It seemed to him that this book, though of its very nature dumb, even as the third parrot had been made dumb, was, nevertheless, like that third parrot and its two fellows, a witness of the crime. In occult fashion, this worn volume knew the truth. If only there were some subtle method by which its fund

of information might be tapped!

As a rule, the Doctor had small patience with the claims of mediums and other demonstrators of psychic phenomena. He had no tolerance for the claims of those sensitive persons who alleged their ability to respond to the vibrations given off by inanimate things, and thus to translate impressions of events in which such objects have been concerned. Doctor Carney was skeptical as to any influence exerted by the aura of material things on human consciousness. Yet, now, as he rested relaxed in his easy chair, with his hands clasped about the old book on his knees, it was as if some vague force stirred secretly in the depths of his being. He felt an impression, vague, most delicate, elusive, not to be understood, as of a rapport between him and the book. Out of this, an impression slowly made itself felt on his consciousness. He became certain that somehow the volume could reveal at least a hint of the knowledge it held. . . . . He roused with a start, and mechanically opened the volume at random, then sat staring blankly at the unintelligible pages.

The impression persisted, though reason flaunted it. There was, of a certainty, no justification for a belief that aught of avail could issue from this source. There was nothing significant in the pages, closely printed in a language un-

known to him, where even the letters of the alphabet showed strange forms. The pages were soiled, with crumpled edges, as from much fumbling by the old Russian sailor's calloused hands. The Doctor's attention wandered for a few moments from the mystery that so engrossed him to musing on scenes in the varied life of the man to whom this book had been an inseparable companion. He had a glimpse of a ship's forecastle where the lantern burned dim in the foul air, as Andrieff, with close-held eyes, finger tracing the line and muttering lips scanned again the familiar sacred texts, which stopped his ears to the obscenities and blasphemies of his fellows crowded about. Into what strange places, and how many, had this old book voyaged with that faithful soul who turned to it so steadily for comfort!

Again, Carney roused himself. It was silly to fall into such idle moods of fantasy. He sat up briskly in an effort to shake off the touch of sentimentality, and began an alert examination of the book. He scrutinized the covers, inside and out, and afterward ran through all the pages, to make sure that nothing lay hidden within them. His search was wholly fruitless. Nowhere could he discover anything significant. When, at last, the examination was completed, the Doctor closed the book with a sigh of dejection. Somehow, in these minutes, he had come to anticipate a revelation.

That anticipation had been unwarranted, yet it had been very real, and by so much his consequent disappointment was keen. He moved restlessly in his chair, and the joggling of the volume on his knees caused it to fall open of its own accord. Carney stared down unseeingly at the two pages thus set before him. Then, presently his eyes came to a focus on the right-hand page. Suddenly, his interest was caught and held. He bent over, and regarded the page closely. Here was something different from the ordinary discoloration of all the pages from the touch of soiled fingers. This was a distinct smudge of dingy color, a little way down the page, in the left of the two columns. It was nearly an inch in length horizontally, and about a half inch in width. It was not uneven, as if some sort of coloring matter had fallen on the leaf, and been smeared about. Instead, the lines of it were fairly even as if the smudge had been the result of intention, a mark placed there for some unknown purpose. Carney regarded the stain with quickening excitement. But sober sense chided this new enthusiasm. He rebuked himself for his growing habit of impressionability; he was becoming too sensitive, sensitive to the point of absurdity. There was absolutely no reason why he should become excited over a particularly noticeable dirty marking in a volume that was so soiled throughout. He closed the book in an

impulse of impatience against his own childishness. Yet, the impression made on him was in no wise lessened. His eyes were unseeing, for within his mind that page with its heavy smear still remained as the object of contemplation. He shrugged in disgust at his own weakness, but he could not oust from consciousness this curious claim to his attention. For distraction, he opened the book and riffled the pages, closed it again, let it fall back in his lap. Again, the book opened of its own accord, and to the same place. Carney found himself staring for a second time at that dingy smudge in the left column.

It occurred to the psychologist that, in all reason, here was something beyond mere coincidence. He tested the fact. By repeated trials he proved that the volume when left free always opened of its own accord to the one place, where the stain showed on the right-hand page. It was obvious enough that the particular place must contain a passage in the Scriptures especially esteemed by Andrieff, to which he had turned so often that the book itself took on the habit of opening there. The fact offered, too, a simple explanation of the smudge. The rusty color of the streak suggested that it might be blood. If so, it might have come from a cut finger of the old sailor, a drop received here where the book had fallen open of itself. The drop would have been modified into a streak

by the later closing of the volume. The objection to this theory lay in the evenness with which the discoloration was made. But Carney deferred consideration of that difficulty. He was absorbed in speculation as to just what passage in the *Gospels* this might be that had been apparently the favorite of Andrieff.

The psychologist set himself to gain knowledge on this point, nor was the task arduous. Above the stain, in the same column, was the numeral for a chapter heading, and it was in a character with which he was familiar, the figure 5. Thus, he knew that the desired passage must be in either the fourth or the fifth chapter of one among the four *Gospels*. The question as to which was easily resolved by taking it for granted that the canon of the scriptures in Russian followed the order with which he was familiar in the English version: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. In accordance with this sequence, the fifth chapter to which the book opened of itself was in the *Gospel* according to St. John, for it was near the end of the volume. Moreover, Carney was able, after a little study of the headings in the book, to make sure that the Russian word in the title to this last section was in fact the equivalent of John, rather than of Matthew or Mark or Luke. In spite of the strange letters, he made sure that the stained page to which the book opened was in the *Gospel*

according to John.

Here, at least, was something definite. Carney hurriedly laid aside the Russian *Gospels,* and got his own New Testament from the bookcase. As he turned the leaves rapidly to the fifth chapter of John, he was conscious of a curious feeling as of close contact with the dead man. He was about to share the confidence of that old sailor, a confidence all unwittingly given through the medium of a stained page in the book he had loved. There was a touch of awe in Carney's emotion as he began to read the fifth chapter. He experienced a feeling almost of timidity, as if he intruded into a sacred place by thus seeking to share in Andrieff's secrets of the spirit. But the psychologist had no thought of letting any scruple deter him.

This is what he read:

1. After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

2. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

3. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the movement of the water.

4. For an angel went down at a certain season, into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatever disease he had.

5. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

6. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he said unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

7. The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

8. Jesus said unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

9. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the Sabbath.

10. The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the Sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.

11. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.

12. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, take up thy bed, and walk?

13. And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place.

14. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

15. The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, that had made him whole.

16. And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the Sabbath day.

17. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

The page ended at this point, and Doctor Carney ceased his reading. He glanced over the concluding portion of the preceding chapter, but gave it only perfunctory attention. He was sure that it was the fifth chapter, on the right hand page of the Russian volume that had so held the interest of Andrieff. He speculated as to why this particular part of the sacred narrative should have made so strong an appeal to the old sailor. Had it been, perhaps, that Andrieff himself had suffered from some infirmity, and thus had been fascinated by the story of another's healing? Or had there been something to provoke especial interest in the account of the troubling of the waters at the pool of Bethesda? Or was his absorption due to some unknown personal bias on his part concerning the observance of the Sabbath? Indeed, so many various matters were touched on in the single page that there was much room for speculation. Unfortunately, such speculation seemed profitless, of no avail toward penetrating to the heart of the mystery. Carney rose with a sigh, and returned the New Testament to its place in the bookcase. Then, he reseated himself, and again took up the Russian *Book of the Gospels*. As he laid it on his knees, it opened of its own accord to the fifth chapter of the gospel according to John. Once again, his eyes rested on the rusty streak.

The psychologist scrutinized the smear with quickening interest. Now, he took note of its exact position. He observed that the stain lay wholly within the fourth verse of the chapter, where it partly obscured one line of the text. On the other hand, its position emphasized two words standing above it. The fancy came to Carney that the streak of color might be actually a line to emphasize the words just above it. He wondered what those words might be. His zeal in this direction became such that he had recourse again to his English version. The fourth verse ran as follows:

4. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water; whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatever disease he had.

He attempted to distinguish the two words above the smear, but in this effort he was baffled by the difference between the two languages, which changed the order of the words and even their number. He determined to seek help in solving this puzzle: he would go to Vera Daniloff. It occurred to him, however, that it might be better not to show her at this time the reason for his inquiry. It would, he decided, be wiser to get the information from her without exhibiting Andrieff's volume. This could be easily done by his pointing out to her the two marked words of the

Russian text. He studied these carefully for a few moments, in order that there could be no possibility of his failure to identify them.

"I have just time to stop in there, and then get on downtown," he muttered, rising briskly. He was reminded of the bandage as he started to put on his hat, and decided to do without it. He found that by a careful adjustment of his hair the lump on his head was sufficiently concealed, and it was with renewed satisfaction in his personal appearance that he presently left the apartment.

Vera Daniloff was visibly depressed, but she welcomed the unexpected visitor with her usual kindliness. When Carney had explained the occasion for his call, she displayed little curiosity though she obediently brought her copy of the Scriptures, and, at the Doctor's direction, turned to the fourth verse of the fifth chapter of the *Gospel* according to John. She ran her eyes over the words, evidently reading them, but as evidently without any interest. The psychologist pointed with his finger to the two that had been singled out to him by the mark in Andrieff's book. In answer to his questioning look, Vera answered promptly:

"*V' kupal'noo.*"

"And it means?" the Doctor exclaimed eagerly.

"In the pond."

Carney was puzzled for a moment.

"But there are only two words," he objected, "in the Russian, and there are three in the translation."

"Literally," was the explanation, "the words mean, 'in pond.' There are no articles before the nouns in Russian, neither 'the,' nor 'a,' nor 'an.' Articles are very silly," Vera continued, with a touch of her usual animation. "One always knows whether it is *a* thing, or *the* thing." The Doctor was not inclined to argue the point. His memory had gone back to the English version. He remembered the phrase in the fourth verse, "into the pool." That was it, undoubtedly. He spoke the words aloud, and Vera nodded.

"Yes, the Russian word might be translated into 'pool,' I think."

"It is the word used in our English version," the psychologist explained as he prepared to take his departure.

But Vera detained him for a moment.

"I have not seen Mr. Farnham," she said, and there was a note of desolateness in her voice.

"He is away," Carney replied. He did not care to be more explicit, for he was a little suspicious as to the present attitude of the girl toward the young man.

"It may be that you would see him?" Vera said.

"It is possible, yes," was the guarded admission.

"Then, please," the girl continued in a flat voice, "would you give him my message? Tell him, whatever happens to him, I should worry."

"But—" the Doctor began in shocked protest, only to be interrupted.

"Yes," Vera cried with a passion in startling contrast to her former manner, "you must tell him my exact words. Will you? Promise me!"

"But——"

"Promise me!"

"Oh, well, then—yes," the harassed Doctor capitulated.

"Just the same, I won't," the psychologist muttered to himself savagely as the door of the apartment closed behind him. "I couldn't bring myself to deliver a message like that to the poor young chap from the girl he loves. I'd rather lie to her. The vulgarity of it is bad enough, but one can forgive that as due to her ignorance of the language, but the heartlessness of it—there's no excuse for that. 'I should worry!' I'm ashamed of her."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE PARROT'S MESSAGE

AFTER dinner that evening, Doctor Carney packed a valise, preparatory for his journey into Connecticut on the morrow. He included in the contents not only the automatic, which he had carried during the day, but also his revolver. It seemed to him that it might be a measure of prudence to have this at hand as a weapon with which to equip Farnham in case of emergency. The effect of his nightmares after the assault on him and his memory of the Russian features of his assailant still influenced him, and he was convinced that his life was actually sought by unknown enemies. It was possible that they might trail him to the shores of the Sound, and there renew the attempt to dispose of him, with excellent chances of success were he taken unawares and without means of protection. Such an encounter, however, would be quite another matter, were he accompanied by Farnham, a strong and courageous young man, and both of them armed and on the lookout.

The task of packing completed, the Doctor established himself at ease in his favorite chair

with the companionship of his pipe, and set himself to a detailed consideration of what he had accomplished by examination of Andrieff's *Book of the Gospels*. By now, he was certain that something of vital importance was indicated by the phrase in the Russian text, under which lay the rusty smear that had arrested his attention. He repeated the Russian words as best he could, guided in part by his memory of the letters themselves, but more by his recollection of Vera Daniloff's utterance.

"*V' kupal'noo, v' kupal'noo,*" he repeated again and again, with a sort of childish joy over the excursion into an unknown tongue. And this pride was increased by the fact that he knew the meaning of the strange syllables. "Into the pool," he translated: "literally 'into pool,' since the Russian has no article. *V' kupal'noo.*"

Somehow, the Russian words, from a natural association of ideas, brought into his consciousness those other phrases in the same tongue—those spoken by the two parrots. Much to his own astonishment, Carney found himself recalling these as well. He reflected that he had in fact heard them often enough and insistently enough to make a strong impression, sufficient even for reproduction of them, but he was none the less gratified by his ability, and his pride continued to increase as he spoke the words aloud.

"S' ikonee. Sto tridtsat' dva arshina." And then he passed to the translation of the two phrases: "From the icon. One hundred and thirty-two yards."

Next, he tried his new skill in a foreign language by pronouncing all three phrases:

"V' kupal'noo. S' ikonee. Sto tridtsat' dva arshina." And again the translation: "Into the pool. From the icon. One hundred and thirty-two yards."

For a little space of time Carney amused himself by aimless repetitions of the Russian words and of the corresponding words in English. Presently, however, he gave over the pastime, and concentrated his mind on the meaning of these phrases. It flashed on him at once that the three might actually be a concerted sequence. The idea startled him by the possibilities thus presented. It required no effort on his part to arrange the three phrases in what seemed their natural order.

"From the icon, one hundred and thirty-two yards, into the pool," he said aloud slowly and distinctly, with entire conviction.

Carney considered the statement with care, and decided that it exhibited inherent evidence of both correctness and completeness. Here was a simple and straightforward announcement. The words conveyed precise information. The direction was plain enough. More knowledge, of course, was

needed, much more. Nevertheless, a beginning had been made. It were absurd to suppose that the sentence thus constructed was merely a haphazard jumble of words, a fortuitous combination exploited by his own overheated imagination. On the contrary, the circumstances well warranted his belief in the importance of the result he had achieved, authorized his confidence that at last he had attained to something vitally effective toward a solution of the mystery. The Doctor went over all his fragments of information painstakingly, and his detailed scrutiny filled him with elation, for reasoning from them approved the conclusion at which he had already arrived. It was not credible that the utterance of the two parrots should be meaningless. The birds had been the constant companions of Andrieff, and that at a time when his whole endeavor was fixed on the task of preserving for Vera Daniloff the fortune in gems entrusted to him. It was during this time that he had taught the parrots to croak each its phrase—taught them so well that they still shrieked the set words tirelessly.

Once again, the mystery of the third parrot loomed before the thought of Doctor Carney. He broke off the train of his musings to consider this mystery from a new aspect. Hitherto, he had always deemed the speech of the two unmutilated birds something incomplete because it lacked that

third part which had depended on the parrot now forever silenced. He had wondered hopelessly as to the words once spoken by the bird now mute. It had seemed impossible ever to learn, impossible even to guess what those words might have been. Now, however, he dared believe that they had been revealed to him, that he had drawn from another source the knowledge denied by the silence of the parrot. The lost phrase was recovered out of the *Book of the Gospels* of Andrieff.

Ideas thronged in the mind of the psychologist under the stimulation of his discovery. He was again confronted with the question as to who had mutilated the third parrot. But now, with his increase of knowledge, he was able to formulate a theory which fitted all the facts, so nicely, indeed, that he deemed himself justified in accepting it as the true explanation. This theory was to the effect that the murderer of the old sailor, when he failed to find the treasure for which he had committed the crime, had understood the cries of the birds, and had realized the purport of the joined utterances, which contained a definite direction to the hiding place of the jewels. The murderer had cut out the tongue of the third parrot in order that this information should never be conveyed to another person. It might be that he had intended likewise to silence the other two

parrots, but had feared to delay longer on the scene. Or it might be that he had judged it enough to obliterate merely the third part of the words.

It must have been, then, that Andrieff had not died instantly after receiving the fatal blow. Doctor Carney sat up suddenly, and pulled fiercely at his cold pipe. He was shivering a little at the picture his fancy painted. He saw the old man supine on the floor, dying swiftly as the blood ebbed from the knife-wound, yet through glazing eyes watching every movement of his slayer, and understanding. Perhaps the assassin talked to his victim, sure that death within a matter of seconds would hold the listener forever silent. Anyhow, Andrieff had understood. When, at last, the enemy took himself off, the dying man managed somehow to get the beloved book from his pocket. It had fallen open of its own accord at that favorite passage, as he must have known it would. Then he had dabbled a finger in the blood welling from the wound in his breast and with the final effort of his strength had drawn that mark on the page below the words, *V' kupal'noo*—into the pool.

Again, Carney broke off the train of his musings. He must know if, in very truth, that smear in the fourth verse of the fifth chapter of the *Gospel* according to John in Andrieff's *Book*

of the Gospels was made in blood. He looked at his watch: It was only half-past nine. He went to the telephone, and called a number. A moment later, he was talking to a noted chemist of the university, with whom he was on friendly terms.

"Isn't it a simple matter to make a test of blood stains?" the Doctor asked. Then, after listening a moment: "If it's not too late, supposing I come right up." The reply evidently pleased him, for he was smiling as he said goodbye and hung up the receiver. He hastened now to the valise which he had packed, opened it, and took out the automatic. When, after making sure that the safety catch was properly adjusted, he had placed this in the right outer coat pocket, he slipped Andrieff's *Book of the Gospels* into the other pocket, took hat and stick and gloves, and sallied forth. He was back again by eleven o'clock. There was no longer any possibility of doubt: the smear on the page of the sacred volume had been made in blood—human blood.

CHAPTER XIX

GOSHKOFF SHOWS HIS HAND

THE same evening that witnessed Doctor Carney's discovery of a possible clue to the mystery in the blood-marked text of Andrieff's *Book of the Gospels*, witnessed also something of particular importance in the life of Vera Daniloff, an event that brought her face to face with feelings hitherto hidden, hardly suspected, and crystallized her convictions in a manner to dominate her future conduct. The occasion was a visit from Boris Goshkoff, who called at an early hour, as had come to be his custom when the girl was not otherwise engaged.

Vera welcomed the guest with her usual sprightly pleasure in the presence of this young man, in whose company she was at ease, free from the trammels of a strange language, at liberty to express her every thought without heed to the necessities of phrasing in an unfamiliar tongue. Moreover, the actor exerted over her the charm of a personality that appeared both intelligent and genial, which was, in fact, unusually attractive. He not only solaced her loneliness in an alien land by the atmosphere of home which he brought with

him, but he entertained her ingeniously and well by the light and swift play of his thoughts, by his sympathetic response to her changing moods, even by the music of his voice, the mobile expressiveness of face and gesture. And, too, it cannot be doubted that the girl took a lively, though unacknowledged pleasure, from the fact that this handsome and attractive fellow countryman adored her. She was aware of his feeling toward her, notwithstanding that she refused admission of the truth to her consciousness. It was here the prejudice of class distinctions held sway in Vera. She was dominated by the instinct of the patrician toward one of ignoble birth. There was a barrier between her and Boris Goshkoff, a barrier that could not be surmounted. She might look over it for her amusement, might permit him to look over it as well in reward for the services he rendered, but the barrier remained, nevertheless, impregnable and enduring. She, the lady, condescended to a certain friendliness with this inferior, who, naturally enough, worshiped her from afar. Even as she refused him the dignity of recognizing formally in her thoughts the actuality of his love, so it never occurred to her that this love could be aught beyond a hopeless passion in which he worshiped thus from afar. She could not conceive a presumptuousness on his part so enormous, so ridiculous, as to encourage him to any hope.

In short, she liked Boris, who distracted her and amused her, but she disdained him as one beneath her. If she relaxed from her native strictness to some degree of intimacy in this new, democratic country where, as she understood, prince and peasant hobnobbed in such extraordinary fashion — rather, where there was neither prince nor peasant, but only a society of equals, if she responded to her environment to the extent of receiving Boris as a welcome guest, she did not in the least alter her inherited belief in the difference of station that separated them wholly and always.

Boris Goshkoff, on the other hand, had no thought of any barrier between him and the object of his love. The distinctions of social caste were to him no more than a swiftly disappearing remnant of old-world tradition. In his own country, the prestige of birth no longer counted. The cataclysm of the revolution had destroyed the sanctity of all social institutions. Even in Russia, then, there was no longer aught to forbid his wooing of this girl of gentle birth, though his own origin was of the humblest. He had attained education, he was skilled in the arts of his profession: he was, therefore, her equal, free to press his suit for her favor, to win her, to wed. Here in America, there was every encouragement to such mating. So, he had merely bided his time discreetly, lest he startle and antagonize the girl

by premature avowal. He had entire confidence in ultimate victory. He knew that he was usually attractive to women, and, in this case, he could not doubt the girl's liking for him so frankly displayed, and he dared believe that the liking did but mask a more tender feeling. Now, he was determined to put his fortune to the test. He had looked with much disquietude on the intimacy that developed between Vera and the young American, Farnham. He was convinced, however, that there was no longer any danger in this direction. His information was sufficient concerning the break between the girl and the architect, and the knowledge influenced him toward making his own declaration at once. He regarded it as probable that Vera's reaction to her falling out with Farnham would be highly favorable to his own projects.

The conversation between the two at the outset was of a trivial sort, light badinage, quick and spirited wit and repartee, with much accompaniment of laughter. Goshkoff, under the stimulus of his resolve, was, at his best, constantly interesting, often brilliant. The girl responded easily to his mood, and for a time forgot all the misery of her situation, and expanded in the pleasure of the moment with girlish simplicity, an ingenuous fervor that her guest mistook for the deeper ardor of her heart. The mistake in judgment inflamed him — so much that he revealed himself incau-

tiously, forgetting the subtle approaches he had planned, acting and speaking as nature impelled.

The two were seated side by side on the couch. Suddenly, without any warning, Goshkoff broke off the refrain of a lilting melody, which he had been humming while Vera, eyes sparkling, cheeks flushed rosily, beat the measure with her hands. He thrust out his own hands, and caught hers in a hot clasp, would have drawn her toward him. But, at the contact, she shrank away, struggled to free herself. Her strength was insufficient, for he did not loosen his clutch on her fingers.

"Vera, I love you!" he said, his voice low but tremulous with the emotion that he no longer sought to conceal. "I love you—I love you!" He bent toward her, his dark eyes flaming.

The girl visibly shuddered at his words. Her face had whitened. She stared back at him with eyes that were brilliant, but cold as ice. Her look met his fully, dominated, so that, after a few moments, his eyes fell, and unconsciously he relaxed his grip on her hands. Instantly, the girl pulled free, and sprang to her feet. Goshkoff, too, stood up, and the two remained facing each other.

"Vera—" he began in the softest note of his voice, pleadingly, only to be interrupted by the girl's swift command.

"Never again! I am not Vera to you." The contempt in her voice was like the lash of a whip,

and the man winced under it. "You have presumed on my kindness. You may go, and you shall not return." The usual alluring curves of her lips were banished under the straightened compression of the mouth. The beautiful face had hardened into disdain, the eyes still cold. She stood proudly erect, a figure of outraged dignity, the whole attitude one of mingled repulsion and scorn.

Goshkoff was appalled by the effect of his impetuous action. He regarded with dismay this imperious and hostile creature thus suddenly sprung into being where before had been only an amiable and happy maiden. Yet, unprepared as he had been for the transition, and disconcerted by it, he was not ready to admit defeat. On the contrary, after the first moments of intense chagrin, he felt more than ever resolved not only to make his plea, but also to win his suit in spite of every obstacle. A desire welled in him to master this woman who deemed his love an insult, to make her his own despite any resistance that she might offer. A certain brutal lust for dominance mounted in his mood, so that when, at last, he spoke again, his words came boldly, charged with conscious power.

"You are back in the times of a history that is dead and done," he began quietly, but with the ring of sincerity in his voice. "Even in our own

Russia, there is no longer anything to stand between such as you and me. Artificial distinctions in the social order are of the past. Here in America, who knows of the noble line from which Vera Daniloff sprang? Here and today, my blood is the equal of any. Sources are forgotten, they no longer count. It is possible that I do not presume in offering you my love, that, instead, I confer a favor. Who are you to show haughtiness toward me? You are now nothing, a nobody—only a girl poor and friendless, with nothing of value except your personal attractiveness. Because that is so great, I love you. Very well, then, my love honors you, for I am greater than you. I have my art. Already, I have established the beginnings of success. I shall be great. My offer to share that greatness with you is not something to be spurned; it merits your gratitude." He paused for a little, and when he spoke again, his tone was gentler, athrill with tenderness.

"And I can give you something greater than success, I can give you happiness. I love you, and my love is not a weak thing. I shall surround you with all the pleasures of love, I shall make your life the fullness of joy." Now, a triumphant note sounded in his words. "I do not suffer from lack of means. I do not depend solely on the money I may gain by my art. I have an income from other sources."

As he paused, the girl spoke in insolent dismissal:

"You have had your say. Now, go!"

Goshkoff shook his head rebelliously, and folded his arms. He was not yet prepared to admit defeat.

"You may think that I am merely boasting when I speak of possessing means. As a matter of fact, however, I am rich."

"With a moujik's savings of a lifetime in kopecks," Vera commented in a tone of derision.

The flush that passion had brought into Goshkoff's cheeks deepened into the red of anger. He forgot caution, and spoke with a candor that a calmer mood would have restrained.

"The slur amuses you perhaps, but it is unjust. When I say that I am rich, I mean it in the sense that you yourself understand the word. I have gold—much gold; and more to come as I require it. Those back of me tap the gold supply of the world. The riches of Russia, hoarded through ages, are ours—all ours. The treasure of other nations will follow. It is only a question of time when we shall dominate the world."

The pallor of Vera's face increased as she listened to the braggart words. Here was, if she could believe her ears, a most ghastly revelation. It was incredible that this young man, with whom she had passed so many pleasant hours, whom she

had so often welcomed with friendliness, could be one of those enemies who had shed the best blood of Russia, who had bereft her of family and home and had driven her into exile, who had even pursued her, killed her loyal servant, stolen the last remnant of her fortune! It was indeed incredible that this man who had partaken of her hospitality could be such a foe—more incredible still that he could avow his ignominy thus shamelessly. Yet, he had spoken clearly, without any trace of shame, with a seeming of pride in his own degradation.

"You are one of them, then," the girl said at last, and her voice was quavering, "one of those creatures of blood. You have sold yourself for their gold. You are paid to do their bidding, to corrupt, to commit any crime set for you."

Goshkoff stood unperturbed by the fierceness of the girl's denunciation. It might be that he regretted his indiscretion, but, if so, he showed no sign of repentance. Instead, he replied with complete assurance:

"It is wise to accept things as they are. It is useless to resist the power that controls Russia. I am intelligent enough to realize the inevitable and to profit from it. The past is past, there is blood on our gold, but do you think that the gold was unstained before we took it? You see, Vera, this is a practical world. Why should we

mourn over the evils that are done with? It is better that we should profit from the plenty that is at hand. You love Russia. As my wife, you will be able to return. I believe that I may be able to acquire your estates. I offer you your country and your home. Besides, I know that, once you put down your foolish pride, you will love me."

"Love you!" Vera cried. "I loathe you! I would not share Heaven itself with you!"

Goshkoff felt the hate that vibrated in her voice, and a jealous wrath flared.

"You fancy, perhaps, that your heart is engaged by this young American nobody, Farnham." He laughed shortly, with a sinister mirth that startled the girl. "A nobody at the moment, yes, but he will be notorious soon. The newspapers will carry his name in headlines; they will publish his picture with the caption, 'The Murderer of Andrieff.'"

A choking cry of despair came from Vera.

"Oh, how dare you, how dare you! What do you know?"

"I know much. Those with whom I am joined are well informed everywhere. This friend of yours will be arrested for the killing of your servant and the stealing of your jewels. He will be convicted, and he will pay the death penalty." The actor snapped his fingers and laughed again,

more evilly than before. "So much for him! When he is in the death house at Sing Sing, it is likely that you will take stock of your heart again, and be inclined to put me there in his stead. I'll be patient, and give you time to learn the inevitable."

"Go!" the girl whispered.

Goshkoff smiled malignantly, and for a little contemplated the miserable figure of despair that was his work. He had no feeling of compunction. On the contrary, he was elated that he had thus humiliated and outraged her every sensibility. She, in her patrician pride, had scorned him. He had had his revenge. He triumphed in the thought that he had exhibited to her so brutally his power of mastery. Farnham would soon be out of the way. For the present, he had done enough toward the breaking of her spirit. Presently, he would come again to assert his authority over her. Now, he could go, content in the knowledge that he had stripped her bare of all illusions, had left her helpless to face utter desolation, a future of despair in which he must show at last as her only hope.

"I'll leave you to think things over," he said briskly, with a change of manner to the casual. "When I come again, I shall expect to find you in a more reasonable mood."

With that, Goshkoff turned and went out.

When she had heard the outer door close behind him, Vera stirred and shuddered. She moved feebly to the couch, and sank down upon it, and lay there in a horror so intense that at last the violence of it achieved for her the merciful respite of unconsciousness.

CHAPTER XX

THE MAN IN THE LAUNCH

ON THE morning following his discovery of what he believed to be a clue in Andrieff's *Book of the Gospels*, Doctor Carney rose with a sense of exaltation that was new to him. He experienced a boyish feeling of delight in anticipated adventure. It was his intention to set out immediately for Connecticut, for the shore of the Sound where the old Russian sailor had hidden himself for a time. The prospect of this excursion had an extraordinary effect on the spirits of the learned man. He was more than ever enthused over the idea of actual participation in vital events. Some part of his nature that had lain dormant during all the years of his life until the last few weeks, was now fully aroused, and he was aquiver with eagerness to be up and doing in the strange new work so curiously thrust upon him by Fate. He reveled in a sense of importance that was very strange and most agreeable to his pride. He realized in himself a dignity hitherto unknown because of his present share in extraordinary events. He reflected complacently on the fact that he it was who had discovered the murder of Andrieff.

Moreover, he believed that he had seen the murderer face to face. In addition to this distinction, he, and he only, had contrived to hit on a clue that might possibly lead to the finding of the jewels. The Doctor repeated to himself as if it were a magic formula of power, the phrases gathered from the two parrots and the *Book of the Gospels:* From the icon, one hundred and thirty-two yards, into the pool. For the life of him, his reason could suggest no possible means toward the application of this obscure direction to the purposes of search, but the mood of the psychologist was superior to reason. He had a sublime confidence in himself, in his ability to achieve, in the correctness of his impulse toward action, in his power to succeed as the chosen agent of Providence for solving this mystery. He hoped not only to retrieve the treasure belonging to Vera Daniloff, but also to establish the innocence of his friend Farnham so terribly and, as he believed, unjustly accused by circumstances. It mattered little to him that, thus far, he wholly lacked any knowledge of a sort that could be brought to bear in favor of Farnham's innocence. The logic of the situation did not disconcert him in the least. He had completely surrendered to his mood, which was one of assured anticipation of success. Where the way seemed dark, there the light would shine in due course. Meantime, he had

only to follow whither inspiration guided him—at the outset, to a little shack somewhere on the shore of Long Island Sound.

Carney still had in mind the possibility of a further attack on him by those unknown enemies who had already assaulted him, but he did not believe that they would venture on violence in the broad light of day. So, he left the automatic along with the revolver in his bag when, presently, he made his way to the Grand Central Station to take train for Clinton, Connecticut. He took the precaution, nevertheless, of casting a wary eye about him from time to time both on his way to the station and after his arrival there, to make sure that no suspicious person was on his trail, and he was relieved to observe nothing suggestive of a watchful enemy. He did not note a man of inconspicuous appearance immediately behind him at the ticket window, who carried a large valise, and who leaned forward as if listening while Carney purchased a ticket, and who, then, as the other passed on, himself bought a ticket to the same point.

Carney reached Clinton in mid-afternoon of a delightful day in early summer. His mood of exaltation had continued, undiminished by the tedium of the railway journey. From the station, he went directly to the one hotel which the village boasted. He walked the short distance, carrying

his bag, and the mild exercise seemed to invigorate him as he breathed in the salty air blown from the sea. His satisfaction waxed as he reached the hotel itself, a modest structure of stone that dated back to Colonial times. It was quaint without and quaint within, its atmosphere wholly unlike that of the modern hostelry. Antique furnishings heightened the effect of transition from modernity into the past, and the change in his surroundings soothed the Doctor, while it in no wise lessened his mood of enthusiasm. An amiable young man, who was the proprietor, ushered him up the single flight of stairs, and installed him in a corner room with windows overlooking the main street of the village.

Doctor Carney, left alone here, took no more time than was necessary to transfer the automatic from the valise to his coat pocket, before beginning his researches. He was surprised and a little disappointed that nowhere could he catch a glimpse of the sea. Therefore, having armed himself, he at once descended to the hotel office, and there questioned the young man.

"Just a little way down Commerce Street," was the instruction, with a gesture indicating an elm-shaded thoroughfare running south at right angles to the main street, just to the west of the hotel, "and you'll come to the shore. The harbor lies there—a busy place in the old days, but quiet

enough now. You'll see the golf links and the club house to your left. The course is a fine one, if you care to play."

The psychologist shook his head at the suggestion, for he had given no time to outdoor sports since his university days, but it occurred to him in his unaccustomed liveliness of spirits that he really ought to take up the game. It were folly to mope in a study with the world outside so fair, when the air of the sea so set the blood atingle.

"I'll have a walk there, anyhow," he announced, and forthwith set out along the way indicated in the pleasant shade of the great elms. The street was of the sort familiar in New England villages, wide and with a strip of turf lying between roadway and sidewalk. The houses on either side were of simple and substantial architecture, some of them genuinely old, others more recent, but fashioned in the older style, so that there was a harmonious aspect throughout the thoroughfare. The dignity was enhanced by a spacious church building, and everywhere by grounds carefully kept, with abundant floral ornamentation. Presently, the Doctor came to a stretch of golf links, a portion of which reached across the highway to the west, but for the main part lay on the east side, extending far to the south. Here, the sidewalk on that side ended, and Carney crossed to the pavement that ran before

the houses facing the links. A little further on, this walk also ceased, and he followed a footpath that bordered the roadway. The ground dipped, a little now, and he saw the placid waters of the harbor, lying only a short way in front. To the right, a large building stood within a plantation of melancholy evergreens, evidently a hotel that opened only for the summer season if at all, for there was no sign of life anywhere about it. Its lugubrious aspect exerted a depressing effect on the psychologist as he stared curiously. He was chilled by the gloomy appearance of this structure, weather-worn and forlorn, girt about by dense shadows, in striking contrast to the brilliant sunlight of the day which elsewhere warmed highway and fields and waters and clothed them with beauty. By an effort, he shook off the evil influence and went forward quickly across the level stretch that led to the water's edge. As he gazed eagerly about him, the Doctor saw that the harbor itself was landlocked, and of small area. It was a tranquil place. There was not even the rhythm of the surf to destroy the calm, only the gentle lapping of wavelets that marked the movement of the tide. On the shore, there was a barnlike building that served the needs of fishermen, and alongside the rickety dock lay a hardly less rickety boat, whence issued a fishy smell that caused the Doctor's nose to wrinkle in disgust.

Disappointment seized on Carney as he looked about him. The mood of confidence that had hitherto supported him throughout the day was rudely shaken. He had expected, somehow, to come at once on the object of his search. But now he realized that he had failed in his first attempt to locate the shack occupied by Andrieff's brother. There was nowhere in the neighborhood any building to answer the description. It was evident that the single structure at hand was not used for dwelling purposes, and there was no other near along the shore. Off to the right, as he stood looking westward, there was nothing save the flat expanse of salt meadows bordering on the shore, until in the distance on slightly higher ground some cottages showed in an irregular line. Further back from the shore, to the north were houses straggling on the outskirts of the village. Carney looked to his left, following the eastern line of the Sound, and again could see only the meadows, and farther back outlying houses of the town. He realized that he must extend his search for the shack. He was doubtful about the prudence of trusting himself to the meadows, where the ground might prove treacherous, and so betook himself back along the roadway a short distance, to where a branch bore eastward at a right angle, skirting the golf course. A house stood on each corner, and as he advanced,

he passed what was evidently the Country Club. Then the roadway abruptly ended, and he found himself at a loss. There were houses beyond, however, and he decided that they must be reached by some other route closer to the shore. At the risk of trespass, he crossed a bit of lawn lying between the highway and the shore, and so came to a bank that extended at a height of a few feet above the meadow. Looking down, he saw that there was indeed a rough track here running east and west. As he scrambled down to it, his eyes caught a glimpse of the figure of a man standing motionless on the far side of the meadow, at the water's edge. Carney halted in amazement to stare at this object so unexpectedly presented to sight, since only a few seconds before his glances had swept all the water front, and no living being had been anywhere within his view. Now, as he intently regarded the motionless man less than a hundred yards distant from him across the meadow, the form suddenly stooped, and in the same second vanished from sight behind the trunk of an uprooted tree, which lay close to the shore. The Doctor stood waiting for the man to straighten up again, to reappear. But the moments passed, and the shore remained to all appearance utterly deserted, there was no sign of life anywhere. A minute went by, and another, and still there was no change. The Doctor

watched alertly, in grinning exasperation but nothing rewarded his vigil.

It occurred to Carney that there had been something suspiciously mysterious in the affair. There had been stealth in the manner of the man's appearance, in the manner of his disappearance. It needed only a touch of suspicion to fire a train of resentment in Carney. The possibility flashed in his mind that the occurrence might be of significance to himself. Secret enemies had already been active against him in the matter of the assault. They had failed then. What more natural than to suppose that they planned another attempt? It might be that they had trailed him on his journey to Clinton. The abrupt looming of that form on the edge of the meadow and its equally abrupt vanishing were sufficient to suggest a sinister purpose. A conviction grew in the Doctor that the man was a spy upon him. With the conviction came anger. A fierce desire to confront the fellow moved him to action. He felt courage enough to face any enemy, and this courage was reinforced by the cool contact of the automatic as he slipped his right hand into his pocket and snuggled the weapon within his palm. At once, then, he left the track and hurried across the meadow, quite unmindful now of any peril from bog or quicksand. So, he came to the tree trunk, and rounded it, and looked down. To his amazement, no one

was there, nor did the spot offer any possible hiding place. He stood alone on the edge of the salt meadow, at the water's brink. As the tide ran, he was some four feet above the level. There was no beach, no nook or cranny to offer even the most meager concealment. It seemed, in fact, that a miracle had been wrought by the disappearance of the man whom he had so recently seen standing in this very spot. He cast eyes further abroad, but he could discern nothing to relieve his perplexity. A few furlongs to the eastward near the shore, a tiny launch moved at a leisurely pace. He noted that the sound of the motor did not come to him, and wondered a little at this, since the distance of the craft from him was so short. Then, he realized that the breeze from the west had freshened, and that thus the noise of the engine was carried away from him. His thoughts in this direction had been purely mechanical, but of a sudden he perceived that here, doubtless, was an explanation of the thing that had baffled him. The man who had vanished had, in all likelihood, come in the launch to this point of the shore where the old tree trunk was lying. Here, he had halted, and had climbed up on the bank for whatever purpose of his own, then had descended again into the boat, and gone on his way, running close to the bank, so that the height of it completely hid him from the eyes of the watcher who

stood in the track on the opposite side of the meadow, and the quickening of the wind had kept all sound of the progress from the ears of that same watcher. Carney sighed with relief that the miracle was thus simply resolved into plain fact so reasonably explicable. But the simplicity of the event by no means altered his belief that it was fraught with import to himself. His conviction was strengthened and confirmed, that the unknown man was in truth a spy upon his own actions, some emissary of him who had slain Andrieff in the effort to secure the jewels of Vera Daniloff. He wondered mightily as to the motive back of this espionage. Was it fear of him, of what he might discover, that drove some one to seek his destruction? Or was it a hope that he might discover what someone else had failed to learn — the secret place where Andrieff had hidden the treasure? Then, at last, another thought blazed in the brain of Doctor Carney: Was it possible that this unknown individual who dogged his steps could be the murderer himself. A new thrill, beyond any hitherto experienced by him, was in Carney's blood as this wild fancy filled his mind. The possibility pointed a way to hope, not only of finding the Daniloff heirlooms and restoring them to Vera, but also of encountering the assassin face to face, of identifying him as the man seen in the elevated train, of capturing him and of render-

ing him to the law's punishment for his crime.

The Doctor returned to the track that ran along the inland edge of the meadow and followed it eastward in renewed questing for the shack of Andrieff's brother. But he found his way barred shortly by an inlet, as he deemed it, and after some investigation he learned that this reached back into the village, and that there was no way to cross it anywhere near the shore. Perforce, he returned to the village by the way he had come. The day was deepening toward dusk as he reached the hotel, and he regretfully gave up any hope of further exploration before the morrow. A brief inquiry addressed to the proprietor informed him that what he had thought to be an inlet was in fact the mouth of a river, which flowed through the village into the Sound. He learned also that to the eastward of this stream another street, Waterfront, led to the shore. He determined to continue his search in this direction next day. The salt air and the unaccustomed exercise had given him a hearty appetite, and he ate of the excellent supper to repletion. Immediately thereafter, to his surprise, and somewhat to his indignation, he was assailed by an overpowering sleepiness, so that he was compelled to go to bed, where he fell asleep instantly, and slept dreamlessly the night through.

CHAPTER XXI

THE DOCTOR'S DISCOVERIES

GARNEY'S enthusiasm over his undertaking remained undiminished when he rose next morning. It was, indeed, if anything more rampant by reason of his increased sense of well-being physically. He was, in truth, full of a vigor quite unaccustomed, which was exhilarating in its effects. He experienced a self-confidence that was as strange as it was delightful. Hitherto, his self-assurance had been based chiefly, if not wholly, on the possession of mental ability. He still retained his pride of intellect, but in addition to it he enjoyed a serene belief in his physical worth, in an energy sufficient to meet any demand upon it. Moreover, lurking in the background of his consciousness was a complacent conviction that occult forces welling within him would guide him aright in any emergency, that a psychic perception would point the way in any crisis. Nevertheless, he determined on a reasonable prudence, rather than on rashness in his procedure. He had intended to carry on his investigation without assistance until such time as he should reach some definite discovery, and he had, therefore, meant to leave Farn-

ham ignorant for the time being of his presence in the neighborhood. Now, however, he changed his intention in this particular. He had been impressed by the possibility that a spy was trailing him. In spite of his courage, he realized the fact that he might fall victim to an attack from the unknown enemy. To be sure, he had his weapon and the ability and the will to use it if necessary. But, too, his adversary would be armed, doubtless, and a shot from ambush on the lonely shore might lay him low without opportunity for defense. It seemed wiser, then, to seek out Farnham in order to have companionship in his further exploration.

So, immediately after breakfasting, the psychologist set forth eastward along the main street of the village. He crossed the bridge where the little river cut the town, and he continued to the street's end, where the highway branched, one road swinging to the right toward the shore of the Sound, and the other bending to the left, running inland. It was this second highway that the Doctor now followed, according to the direction given to him by the architect. He found himself in genuine country, with only here and there an isolated farmhouse. A half-hour of brisk walking brought him within view of the stream that Farnham had described. The bungalow was not in sight, but Carney without hesitation followed southward along the river bank, and soon

glimpsed the little structure that was his destination. As he went forward, the Doctor saw Farnham himself come out of the house and stand looking out over the river and the landscape beyond. He called out, and at the hail the young man whirled and gaped with amazement as he recognized the little man hurrying toward him. That he was disturbed by the coming of this unexpected visitor was indicated clearly by his words and the excitement with which they were spoken:

"You, Doctor! What is it? Why are you here—to warn me?"

Carney shook his head, and grinned reassuringly while the two shook hands.

"Everything is all right," he declared. "And, anyhow, you're only under suspicion. I saw Maxwell the morning after you left, and he told me all about it." He looked pityingly at the young man as he spoke, for the white, lined face told of strain.

Farnham answered the commiseration in the other's gaze, and his tone was shamed, apologetic.

"This being a fugitive gets on my nerves," he confessed bitterly. "I'm getting disgustingly timid—a bit jumpy—'every bush an officer' you know, and that sort of thing. The worst of it is, I can see no hope for the future."

"Maybe you will when I've explained things," the Doctor replied cheerfully. But the young

man's face did not lighten.

"I can see no way out," was his somber reply. "But come inside, and we'll talk." He gestured toward the door which stood open.

The two entered the living-room of the bungalow, which was sparsely furnished with a few chairs, a table and a couch. When they were seated, and the Doctor was puffing at his pipe, Farnham revealed again his mood of fear.

"Are you sure you weren't followed from the city?"

"Not by anyone from Police Headquarters, which, I take it, is what you mean but, all the same, I may have been followed—not on your account, but on my own. Just listen, and I'll tell you the whole story." The psychologist smiled shamefacedly. "I might as well admit in the beginning that my story contains precious little fact and a lot of guesswork. You'll have to be patient with me, and just try to get my point of view. You see, I want your help, and I want it badly. In return, I have a feeling, a conviction that the result will be to your advantage."

"I'm ready to listen, of course," the young man responded courteously, though not at all hopefully. It was evident that it would require something definite in the way of information to lessen the depression under which he suffered. Doctor Carney realized this, but the fact in no wise

daunted him. He believed that he would be able to impart to his companion some portion at least of his own optimism. Thus, still eager and self-confident, he began his narrative.

Farnham listened attentively to the detailed account. He was interested, if not hopeful, throughout, for this matter was of vital concern to his own safety. But, when at last the psychologist reached a conclusion, the face of the architect expressed only a profound disappointment. It seemed to him that the whole structure reared by the Doctor was no more than a figment of dreams, of fantastic theories without the reality of facts, merely something chimerical, a fabric of absurdities. There was nothing in these vague imaginings to point a way to the discovery of a murderer in whose stead he stood accused. Nothing in Carney's story held a promise of his own escape from a situation that menaced his liberty, even his life. He summed up his feeling in a terse statement that was like an icy douche on the Doctor's heated fancies.

"You have found a blood stain in Andrieff's *Book of the Gospels*. The two words above it mean, 'into the pool.' That seems to be all that you have actually accomplished. It is wild guesswork to suppose that those two words had anything to do with the jewels. They cannot possibly help in the identification of the murderer, which

to me is the one thing that counts. Probably the smear of blood was just accident. On the face of it, your interpretation is preposterous."

"But I feel—" the Doctor began to protest, deeply mortified by the young man's harsh criticism.

Farnham interrupted impatiently.

"That's the trouble, you feel, and you let your feelings carry you into all sorts of extravagance. I am surprised," he continued harshly, "because when I read your books, I was so impressed by the carefulness of your reasoning. Now, it seems that you have cast logic to the dogs."

"It may be," the Doctor conceded, recovering his poise, "that I haven't a logical leg to stand on. I confess that I am acting on impulse, rather than from reason. But I believe that ultimately reason will justify me. In the meantime, I'm not asking you to accept my ideas. Leave judgment to the future. I do, however, want your companionship and help." He grinned quizzically. "You're not very busy, I take it. Suppose you go with me this afternoon to explore along the shore of the Sound. Will you?"

"Oh, as for that, yes," Farnham agreed readily enough, although without enthusiasm. "But I don't in the least see what you can expect to find."

"I expect to find the shack where Andrieff lived with his brother," Carney declared firmly. "Of

course, I could hunt for it alone, but I don't mind saying that I'm a bit nervous over the man I think may be a spy. I'd feel safer with you along. Do you know the street running down to the shore which they call Waterfront?" Farnham nodded.

"Will you meet me at the foot of it at, say, two o'clock?"

Farnham agreed to this, and soon thereafter Carney set out on his return to the hotel. The discomfiture over his friend's lack of sympathy was quickly dissipated. As he strode along the pleasant highway toward the village, filling his lungs with invigorating air from the sea and delighting his eyes with the gracious hues of the landscape in the freshness of its summer garb, his spirits, momentarily depressed, rapidly mounted again, and he felt anew the self-confidence that had actuated his endeavor thus far. The walk in the open had whetted his appetite and he ate voraciously of the mid-day meal. Afterward, he sat for a time on the hotel porch, chatting with his host. At two o'clock, however, he ascended to his room, where he took from his valise the revolver intended for Farnham. He placed this in the left pocket of his coat, and, thus prepared, he took himself down the street and across the bridge over the little river on the way to Waterfront. He was amused by his feeling of guiltiness as he responded to the greetings of the villagers whom

he encountered, for he wondered what they would think of him were they to know of the concealed weapons he bore. Certainly, they would deem him a dangerous desperado. The usually mild Doctor chuckled at the thought, and strutted a little, gratified by an increased sense of importance due to the lethal armament hidden on his person. Let the spy beware!

Carney turned south along Waterfront, which ran at a right angle from the main street down to the shore. The houses of the town lined both sides of the highway to its end. Where the street ceased, the Doctor came upon a tiny plot of greensward, a miniature common with a great elm shading it. Just in front, down a shelving bank lay a narrow inlet. Off to the right were salt meadows, green and bare. In the foreground on the right shore of the inlet was a building of corrugated iron, which from the litter about it was apparently the workshop of a builder of boats. In the inlet itself were lying a few skiffs and launches. To the left stood a group of houses, but no human being was in sight. A rough track sloped downward from these to the inlet at a point where a bridge spanned the water. On the far side lay an extensive tract of the salt meadows that bordered to the southward on the open Sound. Beyond these, within a distance of half a mile, the shore rose in ridges on which cottages had been

built. The meadows themselves were barren of structures throughout their whole extent, save for a single roughly constructed building which stood not far beyond the bridge, to the right of the track, which ran across the meadows toward the distant cottages. At sight of the isolated building, Carney's pulses leaped in sudden excitement. This might be, could be, should be the shack for which he sought. He hurried forward along the track and out on the bridge, where he halted again to stare eagerly at this structure that was perhaps the goal of his hopes. His attention was, however, interrupted by a hail that sounded behind him. He faced about and saw Farnham trudging toward him from Waterfront, and responded with a wave of the hand.

It was evident that the depression of the architect's morning mood had yielded, in some degree at least, to the wholesome influence of the day and his surroundings, for the tensity of his expression had relaxed, and he was smiling whimsically as he greeted his friend.

"Here you are," he remarked cheerfully, "entirely surrounded by nothing remarkable, so far as I can see. There's not a spy in sight, much less an assassin — unless," he concluded with a sudden change of grimness, "you take the police opinion of me."

"Just to prove that I don't," Carney answered,

"I'll present you with this." With a cautious glance about to assure himself that no observer had come on the scene, he produced the formidable-appearing revolver from his pocket, and held it out to the young man.

"What's all this?" Farnham demanded.

"A measure of prudence," the psychologist replied. "That thundering crack I had on my head the other night developed a new bump of suspiciousness. I go armed now, and I want you also to go armed when you're with me. My experience with that chap yesterday, too, was a warning, I think."

"It seems silly," Farnham commented, "but anything to oblige." He took the weapon, and examined it and tested the mechanism in a manner that showed familiarity. "At least, it will do no harm, for I sha'n't use it."

"Let us hope there will be no necessity," Carney remarked noncommittally. Then he changed the subject to one of more absorbing interest, by announcing with an air of much complacency: "I think I've found the shack where Andrieff put up with his brother."

"Where?"

The psychologist pointed toward the small building that stood on the meadow no more than a furlong away beyond the bridge, and about midway between roadway and inlet.

"That must be it. It's the only building of the sort anywhere along the shore."

"It doesn't look much to get excited over," was Farnham's disparaging criticism, "but I suppose your curiosity must be gratified. This must be about exhibit—let's see: There are the three parrots, A, B and C, then Andrieff's *Book of the Gospels,* exhibit D, which makes the shack exhibit E in your collection of evidence. Well, we'll make short work of it. There's not much to see."

The two went down from the bridge along the trail for a few rods, and then walked over the meadow to the diminutive dwelling of boards. It was indeed, as Farnham had said, a simple task to make a thorough examination. The structure was square, without foundation, and the only openings were a doorway and one small window. Both of these faced toward the sea. The door itself was shut and fastened by a padlock. The window, however, was without frame or glass and permitted full survey of the interior. Farnham came to it first, glanced in, and immediately turned away with a contemptuous grunt. The psychologist took the other's place, and thrust his head eagerly into the opening. For a little, the dim light after the brilliant sunlight without, made dimmer by his own obstruction of the opening, baffled his eyes. Then, presently, his vision cleared and he began to notice details within the shadowy space. But

those details were not of a sort to encourage his hopes of finding something valuable in this place. The room was, in fact, almost bare of furnishing. A deal table stood in the middle of the floor, and near it were two three-legged stools. There was a bunk against one of the side walls, filled with hay. No other object of any sort whatever rewarded the Doctor's long scrutiny. Even after he was fully convinced of this barrenness, he continued staring into the murky interior with a growing sense of failure. In this moment of acute disappointment, he realized for the first time a definite expectation that had been killed before it was born. He knew now that he had subconsciously thought to find here in the shack of Andrieff's brother that thing that had counted for so much throughout his scheme of solving the mystery. The jargon of the two parrots was ringing in his ears again:

"S' ikonee."

"Sto tridtsat' dva arshina."

And following these, the two words from the Gospel according to John, which were emphasized in Andrieff's *Book of the Gospels* by the smear of blood beneath them:

"V' kupal'noo."

And with the three phrases in the foreign tongue sounded also the translation into English, which stood in the mind of the psychologist as a com-

pleted whole, the formula for the finding of Vera Daniloff's lost fortune:

"From the icon, one hundred and thirty-two yards, into the pool."

At the outset, then, there was need of the icon to mark the starting point of those paces leading to the unknown pool wherein, it might be, the jewels lay hidden by the cunning of the old Russian sailor in an effort to thwart enemies hot on his heels. Now, at last, Doctor Carney perceived clearly that he had anticipated the discovery of that icon in the shack of Andrieff's brother. The idea had not risen plainly into consciousness, but it had dominated him none the less. It had brought him here full of hope, only to encounter despair. For the dimness within the room was not sufficient to hide the bareness of the four walls. There was nothing on any one of them — not a cupboard, or a shelf, or a picture of any sort. A groan of disappointment broke from the lips of the psychologist, for his grief was bitter. Cold disillusionment gripped him. Here was nothing. He must begin his search all over again, but how, where? He turned away from the window slowly, reluctant to confess defeat to his companion.

To the Doctor's surprise, Farnham was not at hand. A swift glance about showed that the young man had vanished suddenly, and without warning. Even as he wondered, the sound of a

distant shot came to Carney's ears, and, immediately following it, another, a little louder and heavier. He looked in the direction of the reports, and caught a glimpse a few hundred yards to the eastward on the shore of the Sound of a form which he believed he recognized as that of Farnham. The man was running, and in a moment disappeared from view beyond bushes that topped the ridge of higher ground. Without hesitation, Carney pulled out his automatic, and set off furiously in pursuit.

CHAPTER XXII

A VALUABLE CLUE

DOCTOR CARNEY raced across the meadow with no thought of possible bogs or quagmire and at a rate of speed surprising in one who had taken no active exercise for years. He was panting heavily when at last he came to the higher ground that here formed a natural rampart along the shore. He rounded the clump of bushes screening the narrow strip of sand along the water's edge, and abruptly halted. Farnham was visible now, standing on the beach a hundred yards away. He was motionless, and the revolver clutched in his right hand was plainly visible. He appeared to be staring intently out over the waters of the Sound. The psychologist in turn looked out on the broad expanse of gently moving waves, shimmering placidly under the brilliant rays of the sun. There was, however, nothing to be seen save a smudge of smoke from the funnel of an invisible steamer on the southeastern horizon. But as his eyes swept the scene in vain, there came to the ears of the psychologist the chugging of the engine of a launch, which sounded vaguely familiar. His gaze went in the direction of

the sound to the stretch of water a quarter of a mile beyond, where the shore line bent sharply to the eastward. Presently, as he listened, he guessed the reason why the noise revealed a familiar quality to his ears: it was because it came from that same launch in which yesterday he had seen the stranger who spied upon him. His guess was justified within a minute when the little craft itself appeared traveling boldly out to sea from a point beyond the curve in the shore. The distance was too great to permit certainty, but Carney was convinced that he recognized the man standing at the wheel as the one with whom he had had his experience of the preceding day. It was evident that there had been some sort of an encounter between the spy and Farnham, and, too, it was equally evident that the fellow had again made good his escape. It was with a sigh of regret over this fact that the Doctor slipped the automatic into his pocket, and trudged onward toward the architect, who still stood staring out over the waters of the Sound.

As Carney came near, Farnham turned, and regarded his friend with a somewhat sheepish grin.

"I had an idea," he said by way of greeting, "that you were a bit crazy with your talk about a spy, but I must admit now, that, if you're loony, why, so am I."

"Ha!" ejaculated the Doctor, as he came to a

standstill, and surveyed Farnham's face with unconcealed triumph. "You actually met our friend, the enemy."

"If we didn't actually meet," was the rejoinder, "we came close enough to exchange salutations."

"With your weapons? I heard the shots. Tell me about it."

The young man was nothing loath. The strained expression had left his face, which was now all animation. For the moment, he was no longer absorbed in the misery of his situation as one falsely accused. The excitement of this adventure had diverted his mood, had thrilled him pleasurably, and he was eager to recount the details to his no less eager auditor.

"It happened while you had your head stuck in the window of the shack. I was taking in the landscape and seascape, considering the possibility of doing some sketches while I am loafing down here. My eyes are pretty sharp, and presently I fancied I made out a movement among the bushes where they begin back there on the ridge. I watched the spot closely, and pretty soon I became sure somebody was standing behind them, peering in the direction of the shack. It seemed as if there was something sly and stealthy about the whole performance. That made me think of your story about the spy yesterday, which I hadn't taken much stock in. I offer you my sincere apologies

for thinking that your imagination had run away with you. My own is just as lively now. Anyhow, that fellow watching us got on my nerves, and I made up my mind to investigate. I started to walk toward him. Then, almost at once, he disappeared. I guessed that he was making off along the shore in order to escape me. That didn't suit me at all, and I started to run in the hope of catching up with him and getting a look at him. I thought it might be interesting to know whether or not the chap's a Russian."

"Quite so!" Carney agreed, nodding his head vigorously.

"Well," Farnham went on, "I failed to acquire any information as to his nationality, but I gathered evidence that he is in earnest. When I broke through the bushes, and came to the edge of the bluff, there was the fellow running along the beach, almost up to the bend. He was too far away and moving too rapidly for me to make out anything definite about him, beyond the fact that he was of about my size or a little shorter, and from the way he sprinted, in capital condition. I let out a yell at him—a silly performance, but I wanted him to stop and wait for an interview. His wishes were quite different. He heard me, all right, for he looked over his shoulder without checking his stride. The next thing I knew, he whirled, just pausing for the fraction of a sec-

ond. I heard a bullet sing past, so close I instinctively ducked. As the report of the shot came, he was already whisking around the bend. The shot halted me in my tracks, just from the utter surprise of it. It made me mighty angry, too, and I went after my own gun as fast as I could. I had the satisfaction of blazing away at his coat tails as he dodged round the bend, and that's all the satisfaction I did have. I started running again, but when I got this far, I heard the launch and knew that he had got away." Farnham waved his hand. "There he is out there now — and here we are. . . . . What's the answer?"

Once again, and more deeply than heretofore, the Doctor was thrilled by the march of events. It was, indeed, amazing to realize that he was the storm-center, so to speak, of intrigues and activities so sinister, so deadly. He had not been disheartened by the previous skepticism of Farnham, but he was made more prideful by the young man's present appreciation of the seriousness of the investigation with which they were engaged.

"What has just happened," he declared solemnly, "is proof that the course I have pursued should lead to a development of prime importance."

"Such as you or I, or both of us, getting shot," Farnham suggested, with a smile that took the edge from his sarcasm.

"I am not to be daunted by personal peril," the

little psychologist announced, with a relish in his tone that astonished his companion. "My own opinion is that things are falling out just right for us. For some unknown reason, this enemy has trailed me. He means to know anything that I may learn. And it's only reasonable to suppose that the spy hopes, through me, to recover Vera Daniloff's jewels, for the possession of which Andrieff was murdered—in vain, as I now believe. The spy is either the agent of the murderer, or he is the murderer himself."

Farnham nodded assent.

"I believe you're right. It appears that this wild-goose chase of yours, as I first thought it, is mighty important to me, for it may give us a chance to catch this fellow, and so clear up the mystery and the suspicion that rests on me. That's my one hope of salvation. So, Doctor, I'm at your orders."

"This is an affair for mutual consideration, not for orders," Carney returned, with a deprecatory gesture. But his friend's change of view increased his self-satisfaction.

"No," Farnham persisted, "you are the captain of this expedition. I am not psychic——"

"Nor am I!" the Doctor interposed hastily. But the other gave no heed to the interruption.

"——nor do I have impulses and leadings of an occult sort. In short, I am prosaic and prac-

tical; I'm not in the least intuitive. You, on the contrary, are a marvel at intuitions, you're a weird wonder, and I take off my hat to you, because you follow up your psychic perceptions with excellent reasoning. But it's not the reasoning that starts you."

"Hum!" Carney mused, "now, is it possible—" He fell silent, reflecting seriously on the problem presented by Farnham's bantering words. He was interrupted presently by a question from the architect.

"Were you able to see anything significant inside the shack?"

The Doctor roused himself with a start, and shook his head dejectedly.

"There's nothing in the shack," he replied, "though I had hoped much from it." Somewhat shamefacedly, he explained the unacknowledged expectation that had brought him hither, the assurance that here he would find the icon, basic point in the formula for the recovery of the Russian girl's treasure. And now, curiously enough, Farnham listened with a respectful attention that he would by no means have accorded an hour earlier in the day. He was coming to trust blindly in the vaguest and the wildest of Doctor Carney's inspirations. He only shrugged his shoulders when Carney voiced utter disappointment over failure in the matter of the sacred picture.

"Eat a hearty supper," he advised cheerfully, "and sleep soundly, and I'll warrant you'll bob up in the morning with an idea snatched out of the absolute by your subconscious—if that's the way to express it—and the idea will be a right one." He clapped the little man on the shoulder, and urged him forward. "You'd best be getting on or you'll be late for supper. I'll keep with you up to Main Street. Better keep close to the hotel, and not give the enemy a chance at you."

The two walked in silence after this, or only chatted of commonplaces until they came to the thoroughfare where their ways diverged.

They separated after the Doctor had promised a visit at the bungalow next morning.

As he went on his way alone, Carney suffered a reaction from the excitement that had buoyed his spirits hitherto throughout the day. A heavy depression lay upon him, and made his mood one of profound discouragement, which continued while he made his preparations for the evening meal and afterward throughout that repast. It had not diminished even when later on he was established in a comfortable chair on the porch with his pipe for companionship and, for perfunctory entertainment, the flitting parade of automobiles on the roadway and the intermittent passing of villagers on the walks. The Doctor found no relief from the weariness of soul that had so suddenly de-

scended upon him. It seemed to him, indeed, that all his high hopes had been shattered. He had esteemed himself as the agent of destiny, and now that esteem was proved the worst of delusions. The revelation as to the futility of his efforts had come with the discovery that the shack on the meadow could offer him no guidance in his search. Farnham's adventure with the unknown man had delayed full recognition of the catastrophe. Now, however, with nothing to distract him, the psychologist confronted the complete fiasco of all his efforts. He nibbled vindictively at the bristles of his mustache in the intervals between vigorous whiffs from the pipe, and the hectic color high on his cheeks deepened while his eyes blinked almost unseeingly through the thick lenses of his glasses. The various events that had brought him to this pass marched in review before him, and from none of them could he derive a hint for comfort. His ears echoed with the guttural cries of the two parrots, and before his eyes showed the third parrot, monstrous in its dumbness, with fluttering wings and gaping beak wherein was the useless stump of tongue. Before his sight rose, too, the soiled and crumpled page in Andrieff's *Book of the Gospels*, on which began the fifth chapter of the Gospel according to John, where stood forth the two words in Russian made conspicuous by the smear of blood beneath them. Over and over in his brain ran

the refrain made by the joined phrases of the two parrots, and those words from the sacred text that he had dared believe those belonging to the stilled voice of the third parrot. "From the icon, one hundred and thirty-two yards, into the pool." The cryptic direction had inspired him to fantastic expectations — expectations worse than fantastic, puerile, silly. The words beat in his head as an un-rhythmic dirge. They had become meaningless. No longer was there hidden in them the promise of achievement. They were no better than the veriest nonsense, nor ever had been. In his absurd egotism, he had ventured to believe that the jumble of syllables was actually a clue to the hiding place of Vera Daniloff's treasure. The Doctor grinned derisively at his own credulity. Almost unaware of his own fancy, he had made this expedition in confident anticipation of finding here the icon that should serve as the starting point for marking out the precise spot in which the gems lay hidden. And there was no icon. The walls of the shack on the salt meadow were bare. No sacred picture hung there, or ever had, in all probability. The idea that had dominated him was wholly extravagant, proved worthless by the fact. Melancholy enwrapped the discomfited psychologist as a pall.

Carney was aroused at last from his profitless reflections by the coming of the young proprietor

of the hotel, who seated himself in an adjoining chair, and remarked pleasantly of the mildness of the evening. The two men chatted aimlessly for a few minutes. Then, the subject that was paramount in the Doctor's mind influenced him in the choice of a topic.

"I went down Waterfront today," he remarked as carelessly as he could contrive, "and crossed over the bridge, and went along the shore. I saw a little shack there on the meadow. I went over to it out of curiosity. The door was padlocked, but I looked in at the window. It doesn't seem to be occupied. I suppose it belongs to some artist who goes there to sketch," he concluded with a rising inflection of interrogation. He was secretly pleased at his cunning in framing the question thus.

"No," was the prompt answer. "It was originally put up by an artist, some years ago, who paid something for permission to Hull, the owner of the meadow along there. But he only occupied it a single season. Afterward, Hull let the shack stand, and lately a Slovak has camped there. But he's gone now."

"Oh, he's gone," the Doctor repeated mechanically. "A Slovak, you said."

"That's a pretty wide term, ot course. I've heard somebody say that he was a Russian. He couldn't talk any English to speak of, but he was quiet and industrious. I looked in on him one day

when I was down that way. I mean that literally. I just looked in on him, and then went away without saying a word." The speaker paused to chuckle amusedly over the memory. "I didn't want to intrude."

"How was that?" the psychologist asked curiously.

"Why, it was simply this way: When I came up to the shack, the door stood wide open. I naturally looked in, and there the old chap was. Of course, walking over the grass that way there wasn't any noise of my footsteps, and I hadn't sung out, so the old fellow wasn't disturbed, and was steadily going ahead with his business without any suspicion of a visitor."

"And what was this business?" Carney demanded, as the other paused. His interest was vaguely excited though, for the life of him, he could seen no reason why it should be. The solitary occupation of Andrieff's brother could by no possible stretch of imagination be of concern to him or to his quest.

"His business was religious," came the surprising information, followed by another chuckle of enjoyment at the memory. "I'm laughing because the joke was on me. Perhaps I'm not very strong on religion myself, but I respect it in others, and so, then, I tiptoed away as quietly as I could without ever letting him know that he'd had a caller."

"But just what was he doing?"

"He was down on his marrow bones with his back to me at the door. He was close up to the wall, facing it, and he was mumbling away to himself in his own language, I suppose, for I could make nothing of it, and he was crossing himself to beat the band."

The Doctor snapped erect in his chair with a suddenness that startled his companion. By a great effort, he sought to restrain further outward evidence of the excitement that boiled within him.

"Got a little cramp," he explained lamely, after a brief delay to make sure that he could hold his voice steady. Then he went on, speaking casually. "Kneeling to a crucifix, I suppose." Again, he complimented himself on his artfulness.

"No," came the reply, accompanied by a shake of the head. "It was just a picture he had hanging there on the wall right opposite the door — a religious picture. I've read," he explained amiably to his absorbed listener, "that every house in Russia has them, and they say their prayers to them. There's a particular name for that kind of a picture, but I forget it."

"An icon!" The word was hardly more than a whisper, breathed gently from the Doctor's trembling lips. A flaming exultation mounted within him, before which the mists of melancholy vanished away utterly. He repeated the word, a

little more loudly, but in a hushed tone as of awe in the presence of a miracle.

"An icon!"

CHAPTER XXIII

ANOTHER MYSTERY

AFTER he had said good night to his host, and had gone to his room, Doctor Carney was all afire with eagerness to be up and doing without an instant of delay. It seemed to him in his first enthusiasm that he must immediately put this new discovery to the test, that he must go forthwith to the shack on the meadow, and there search for the jewels of Vera Daniloff. But sanity counseled postponement. A little reflection brought prudence. He realized that alone in the darkness he could by no means make the search with such carefulness as would be essential to its success. Moreover, in spite of a recently developed audacity, he perceived that the project would be too reckless, since there was the spy to be reckoned with, that mysterious stranger who kept at his heels, who might be at this very moment lurking somewhere without in the shadows, waiting for an opportunity to strike him down. And the man was undoubtedly dangerous, a fellow who did not hesitate at violence, quick with a weapon, as he had demonstrated in the episode of the afternoon. It was this same sinister figure of the unknown that

warned the Doctor against an attempt to visit Farnham at once. He was fairly bursting with desire to carry the news to the architect, but discretion forbade the journey over deserted country roads at such an hour. It would be foolhardy to run the risk of being ambushed by an unscrupulous foe. Common sense insisted that further action must be delayed until the morrow. The psychologist reluctantly yielded to the dictates of his own reasoning, and determined to wait with what patience he could. He was still in a state of exaltation, and in his ears sounded more loudly and persistently than ever before the cries of the two parrots and the two words marked by the bloodstain in Andrieff's *Book of the Gospels,* which, he now made sure, was the phrase that forever sought utterance from the gaping beak of the third parrot — sought, and sought in vain.

"S' ikonee, sto tridtsat' dva arshina, v' kupal'noo."

And with the reiteration of the Russian words, there sounded as insistently the translation into English.

"From the icon, one hundred and thirty-two yards, into the pool."

The effect within the brain of the exalted psychologist was that of a tremendous antiphonal chorus and this chorus was a paean of triumph.

The Doctor's mood of exaltation continued, but

it was speedily obscured by a great lassitude, a sudden weariness of the body and the mind, which, nevertheless, left the spirit untouched. The day had been strenuous for one of sedentary habits through a long term of years. The active exercise in the open air and the excitement undergone had taken toll of his energy. Fatigue mastered him. It required a strong effort of will to get off his clothes, and make ready for the night. He was fast asleep before his head touched the pillow, and slept dreamlessly until awakened by the sunlight in his eyes. He was chagrined to find that he had overslept, and by so much had delayed carrying the news to Farnham. By way of compensation, however, he found himself fully refreshed, vibrant with vigors of a physical sort that were unfamiliar and most agreeable. His spirit was still uplifted with the feeling of victorious achievement, and it seemed to him that his body as well shared harmoniously in his spirit's mood. He ate ravenously, though hurriedly, and immediately afterward set out for the bungalow.

Farnham greeted his visitor with an air of cheerfulness that contrasted sharply with his despondency of the morning before. It was evident that the adventure of the previous afternoon had diverted him from overmuch melancholy brooding on his unfortunate situation. His manner now was alert, and he smiled down on the little psy-

chologist with an expression mildly tolerant as toward one erratic, but withal wholly admiring.

It was the Doctor's intention to be precise and dignified in his presentation of the facts. But his effort in the way of a calm and matter-of-fact salutation did not in the least deceive Farnham.

"Now, now, Doctor," the young man exclaimed, as his smile widened into a grin of appreciation, "you've gone and plucked something out of the absolute, just as I said you would. Tell me."

"Not at all, not at all," the psychologist denied, making a visible effort to maintain a superior manner. "Nothing recondite, I assure you. But I have managed to acquire a bit of information by a means entirely prosaic."

"Aha! I knew it," Farnham declared. "Come in and sit down, and we'll have the story."

Carney, with some difficulty, remained silent until the two were comfortably established in the living-room of the bungalow, and he had his pipe going. Then, at last, he related what he had learned from the conversation with the hotel-keeper.

"So," he concluded, "there's the point indicated for the beginning of the search. Evidently, Andrieff's brother has gone, but the shack is there on the meadow. He carried off his icon with him, but we know now that it was there on the wall of

the shack, right opposite the door. It's the starting point, I tell you. Its absence makes no difference. The measure of the distance runs from the place where it hung on the wall. We must begin the search at once. I believe it will be a very simple matter."

"Maybe," Farnham conceded grudgingly, but he shook his head dubiously. "To an ordinary person like myself, your ideas, Doctor, seem a little highfalutin, but you're in a class of your own. After you've had luncheon with me, we'll put this latest theory of yours to the test."

Carney would have preferred an immediate start, although it was already noon. He yielded to his host's insistence, however, and ate heartily of the meal hastily improvised out of Farnham's well-stocked larder. After a further delay for a digestive smoke on which the young man insisted, much to the other's impatience, the two set forth, and followed the highway back to the town and down Waterfront to the shore. The day had grown unseasonably warm, with a promise of coming storm in the damp, heavy air. The rapid walk taxed the energies of the psychologist, and he was glad to halt for a few moments on the bridge spanning the inlet, to let his breathing grow quieter and to mop his face, which was streaming with perspiration. Farnham regarded the older man with solicitude.

"Take it a bit easy, Doctor," he counseled. "You've been going it pretty hard for one of your habits."

Carney smiled with an air of superiority.

"I am convinced," he retorted, "that 'going it hard,' as you express it, is exactly what I needed. The fact is, I never felt better in my life. I required a shaking up, and I've had it — am having it — and it's bully. I'm sweating just now partly because the weather has turned muggy, and partly because I'm excited. Let's go."

The two descended from the bridge, and, leaving the roadway, crossed the meadow to the shack.

"Wait a minute," Carney directed. "I want to take another look in at the window." He thrust his head through the opening, and stared about the shadowed room blinkingly, impatient of the delay necessary for the adjustment of his eyes to the dim light. At last, after a wearisome interval as it seemed to him, his vision cleared, and he was able to observe the bare interior with sufficient distinctness. He centered his attention on that point of the roughly boarded wall which was immediately opposite the door. Memory repeated to him what the hotel-keeper had said as to the Russian's kneeling on the floor directly in line with the door and facing the wall. It was this part of the wall, before which the foreigner had thus

reverently prostrated himself, that now received closest scrutiny from the eager psychologist. His straining eyes traversed length and breadth of the area opposite the door, and, presently, an ejaculation of intense satisfaction broke from his lips. His gaze remained fixed for a few moments on a point in the central section of the wall, at about the height of his own head had he been standing there. Satisfied, the Doctor withdrew from the window opening, and addressed Farnham, who had been engaged in a careful survey of both land and water, in order to make sure that the spy was nowhere visible.

"I have verified the testimony already received," Carney announced, and his voice was triumphant. "I have proof, of a negative sort, so to speak, that the icon hung on the wall exactly opposite the door, just as I was told. There is a place some inches in extent, of about the size the icon would be, which is noticeably lighter than the other part of the wall surrounding it. That is evidently the spot where the picture hung."

"Reasonable enough," Farnham admitted.

"I am deeply ashamed of my perceptive powers," the psychologist continued. Then, in answer to the young man's look of inquiry, he explained tersely. "I should, of course, have observed this fact yesterday, and have deduced the truth from it."

Farnham nodded.

"It's my belief," he responded, with an amiable grin, "that your method of detection is not deductive. You go right to the fountain head, to the absolute, for information."

Doctor Carney changed the subject abruptly.

"Let's begin," he urged. "You're better built for pacing yards, so suppose you measure off the distance."

"What is it exactly?"

"The Russian is, *Sto tridtsat' dva arshina,*" was the pompous reply, "that is to say, a hundred and thirty-two yards."

"Straight out in a line from the point midway on the wall through the door and on over the meadow, a total distance of a hundred and thirty-two yards."

"That's it. Stand with your back to the door, and go ahead."

"Wait a moment," Farnham objected. "We have to subtract the width of the space between the door and the wall from our total of a hundred and thirty-two yards. That will be, say, three yards off."

"A hundred and twenty-nine paces then."

"Yes. But I'm not encouraged by the prospect." Farnham's voice was so brusque that Carney regarded him in dismay.

"What's the matter now?"

"The matter is that I don't need to pace the distance in order to know that the attempt will be a failure. You can see, Doctor, from here with the naked eye that there is no pool anywhere between here and the shore. Besides, we know that because we chased across the meadow right on this line yesterday after that spy of yours, and we didn't splash through so much as a mudhole, much less a pool."

"But there must be a pool," Carney insisted desperately.

"There must be to bear out your theory," was the dry retort, "but there isn't as a matter of fact. I'm pretty nearly as sorry as you are, Doctor, but I'm afraid you're dished."

Nevertheless, the psychologist refused to be convinced without a further struggle. He did not attempt to argue, but, after a hurried nibbling at his mustache as if for inspiration, he suddenly advanced to the doorway, and after pausing there with his back to it, he moved forward in a straight line, stepping slowly and high and long, evidently pacing conscientiously to the best of his ability, performing for himself the task refused by his companion as useless. Farnham followed in the Doctor's wake. At another time, he would have been amused by the ridiculous figure of the little man striding so laboriously and awkwardly over the meadow. Now, however, he had no heart for

mirth, since he realized how grievous to this friend must be this failure of high hopes. It was indeed, as he had said, there was nowhere any least sign of a pool throughout the expanse of the meadow where it lay spread between the inlet to the right and the raised track of the road on the left, with the shore of the Sound as boundary in front. The ground lay level as a whole, with only slight depressions in the surface here and there, unevennesses massed by the rank growth of grass.

So, Doctor Carney came to the last of the hundred and twenty-nine paces, and halted, and stood silent, staring about him intently. He stood dry-shod, and nowhere could his searching glances find a trace of the pool for which he longed. The words of the parrot that was dumb were roaring in his ears: *"V' kupal'noo, v' kupal'noo, v' kupal'noo!"*—the words over the smear of blood in Andrieff's *Book of the Gospels: "V' kupal'noo, v' kupal'noo, v' kupal'noo!"*—"Into the pool!"—and there was no pool. Farnham, too, stood silent. He could think of no word of comfort to offer his friend in this moment of misery.

At last, after a long interval, Carney spoke.

"It might be at any point in a circle with the radius of a hundred and thirty-two yards, starting from a point where the icon hung. There is nothing to show that the line ran through the doorway."

"That doesn't help any," Farnham replied. "It only needs a look to know that there is no pool on this meadow."

There was another long period of silence. Then, the Doctor spoke authoritatively.

"If you don't mind, Farnham, I wish you'd leave me here for a while. I want to think. I haven't done any real thinking since I've become mixed up in this affair. Now, if ever, is the time for it."

"Right you are," the young man agreed. "I'll go back to my place. If you can stand another picked-up meal, come along when you're ready, and join me for supper."

The psychologist nodded acceptance of the invitation.

"I'll come. Good-bye." Without further word, he started walking away toward the shore of the Sound. A sudden thought caused Farnham to call after him.

"But what about that spy? Supposing he should turn up?"

Carney flared. He did not pause, but spoke over his shoulder, as his hand slipped into the coat pocket where lay the automatic.

"Damn him," he gritted. "I hope he does."

CHAPTER XXIV

A CLUE FROM THE SEA

DOCTOR CARNEY walked forward briskly across the meadow, without a backward glance. When he came to the little ridge that rose from the meadow along the shore of the Sound, he rounded the bushes growing on the crest, and seated himself on the grassy bank, a miniature bluff overlooking the narrow strip of sandy beach below at the water's edge. The spy, of whom he had spoken with such unaccustomed violence, was still in his mind, and on his way to this spot he had looked carefully all about to make sure that the enemy was not lurking somewhere near. Now, his eyes roved the shoreline, still seeking any sign of the stranger's presence. No one, however, was anywhere visible within the distance of his vision. There was not even a launch in sight off shore. It was possible that the man might be hidden beyond the bend, a few hundred yards further to the eastward, at which point he had made his escape in the launch the day before; but, if this were the case, he could not approach nearer without revealing himself, since the straggling bushes of the rising ground offered scant

cover. Carney was certain that the fellow would not venture an open attack thus by daylight, whatever his ultimate purpose might be. So, though he maintained watchfulness, he dismissed the enemy from further consideration, and gave himself over to miserable brooding on the manner in which his hopes had been blasted. At first, his mood of utter dejection continued unabated. By so much as he had anticipated triumph, by so much despair was now his portion. It seemed to him that the failure was complete, irremediable. The formula had proved a delusion under the test. There was nothing left. All of his efforts, in the culmination, had but demonstrated that his whole theory was no better than a chimera of the imagination, worthless, nonsensical.

Yet, as the dragging minutes passed, Carney became aware of something that astonished him vastly. In spite of the crushing disappointment, in spite of despair, in spite of the evidence of his own senses, hope was not dead. It had been sorely stricken; nevertheless, it was still alive. It stirred there at the back of his mind, torpid, uncertain, yet living. Presently, he became actively aware of that persistence. Something within him remained undaunted in the face of disaster. A feeling of restored confidence in himself manifested. It was without justification by reason, but the psychologist had recently attained a stage of

development that could disregard the demands of reason, could deny them without a qualm. He welcomed the change of mood. In sheer desperation, he dared again believe in a theory already proved wrong by the facts. He realized that he could contrive no alternative scheme. He must, then, hold to his original idea — else, he would have nothing. He boldly reverted to the formula of Russian words gathered from the parrots and Andrieff's *Book of the Gospels*. In them, and in them alone, was the possible promise of success. Apart from them, he was powerless. "From the icon, one hundred and thirty-two yards, into the pool." Somehow, there must be truth in the phrases; somehow, they must be interpreted aright. But how? The Doctor smiled grimly at himself. He was prepared to admit that the clear thinking on which he had so prided himself would avail nothing. He must, instead, await an inspiration, an intuitive perception, a flash of illumination that would bring light into the darkness of futile mental processes. Or, as Farnham so flippantly suggested, a bit of information must be boldly plucked out of the absolute.

Carney's session with his own thoughts calmed him. The turmoil of his spirit became stilled. He reached the comfortable conclusion that victory remained a possibility, notwithstanding the disaster of the afternoon. It was only necessary

to await the issue passively. Something essential would be revealed, to change defeat to triumph. The Doctor cast the weight of responsibility from him, and relaxed. He took new note of his surroundings without a thought of the spy, and found pleasure in them. A smile of amusement bent his lips at the ease with which he denied all logical requirements, and gave himself to an unreasoning faith.

The air was still heavy with moisture, and the fleecy clouds of the morning had taken on a blackened bulk warning of storm. Yet, here overlooking the placid waves of the Sound, which still shimmered under the rays of the westering sun, an agreeable freshness was borne in the breeze, light and warm, and carrying a tang of the salt sea. The Doctor looked out over the water of the Sound, and found the sight a most pleasant one. His eyes followed the easy rise and dip of gulls in their endless quest for food, counted the smoke trails of distant steamers plying the horizon to the southeast. He even felt a little thrill of excitement when his gaze became fixed on an object westward, on the beach beyond the mouth of the inlet, and he was able to recognize it as a heron, standing motionless at ease, with one leg snuggled restfully out of sight. His eyes moved slowly back from the bird across the inlet and over the strip of sand on the nearer side, until they came to rest on

the wavelets ceaselessly lapping against the pebbles of the shore just below his perch on the bank. It was with idle interest that he regarded the rhythmic swinging to and fro of the tiny crest. It was pleasant to scan the languid, undulate movement of the water, restful, lulling. Then, presently, he became aware that the advance and retreat of the little waves were not quite evenly balanced: there was slow progress toward the shore, an encroaching of the water by minute degrees, steadily. With no particular interest, Carney observed to himself that the tide was coming in. The fact, however, served to remind him of the passage of time. He cast a speculative eye toward the sun, which now dipped close to the horizon, and decided that it was time for him to start on the walk to Farnham's bungalow. He got to his feet, and moved off smartly, back along the way he had come. He descended from the ridge, and stepped out on the meadow. But he halted, with an exclamation of mingled surprise and annoyance, then turned and jumped back to the higher ground. He looked again out over the meadow, and saw sparkling within the meshes of grass the layer of water brought in by the tide. He had no wish to wade ankle deep, and so looked about him. Further to the eastward, the higher ground spread inland, and reached to the roadway. The roadway itself was built up a few feet beyond the level of the salt-

meadows on either side of it, and the reason for this was now obvious. Carney followed the higher ground to the road, and thus onward to the bridge. Here he paused for a moment, to stare dubiously at the shack, and at the meadow lying outspread before it, where already the spears of grass were almost wholly submerged.

"Soon," Carney mused, "the entire place will be just one big pool." The thought was mocking. But the mockery of it fired the train of understanding. It was in this moment that the flash of illumination came. It was as if he had a vision, in which he saw the tide running out hours later, flowing back, away from the meadows, and, as it went, leaving here and there in every hollow of the ground a little pool—a pool that would remain—a brief span of time until emptied by slow seeping into the earth. Once again, Carney heard the cries of the parrots, saw the blood-marked words in the *Book of the Gospels*—that unuttered phrase of the third parrot, which was dumb:

"S' ikonee, sto tridtsat' dva arshina, v' kupal'noo."

Mechanically, the doctor translated the words into English:

"From the icon, one hundred and thirty-two yards, into the pool."

And he added, almost with reverence as he

muttered the words:

"Into the pool! Yes—when the tide's gone out!"

Then, almost running in his haste, Carney set out for the bungalow.

CHAPTER XXV

THE SECRET POOL

AS HE approached the head of Waterfront, Doctor Carney slackened his pace in hesitation. The threat of storm was not to be disregarded. The ominous signs in the sky promised a drenching downpour that would not be long delayed. Already, the fitful breeze had died, and the humid air was still in that oppressive calm which presages the tempest. It occurred to the psychologist that he would do well by returning to the hotel so near at hand, there to don the light raincoat of oiled silk which he had brought in the valise, and to equip himself with the electric torch, which also he had thoughtfully included in his baggage, since on the road beyond the village street the way would be unlighted, and the darkness of a rainy night would make the going difficult, even dangerous. The little delay involved by returning to the hotel would not matter in the least, for the evening had scarcely begun, and no precise time for his arrival at the bungalow had been set.

"And it isn't as if my being late would ruin the masterpieces of a French chef," the Doctor reflected, and he smiled wryly at thought of the sort

of meal that would await him at the bungalow. For he realized suddenly that he was very, very hungry. Visions of rich, satisfying viands floated in his brain as he turned to the left in the main street and hurried toward the hotel. He thought with distaste of Farnham's proffered hospitality from a larder of tinned things. The result was that he presently entered the dining room of the hotel, and ate to repletion of the excellent hot dishes set before him. He had no qualms of conscience over such treachery to his friend. New energy from the food coursed in his blood, and he felt himself equal to any endeavor. The meal done, he paused only to smoke a single pipe in his room, then donned the raincoat and, with torch and automatic safely stowed in the pockets, set out on the tramp to the bungalow.

With the setting of the sun, night had closed in rapidly under the inky canopy of clouds. By the time Carney turned into the highway running to the left from the end of the village street, and the electric lights were left behind, the darkness had become such that flashes from the torch were necessary in order to make sure of the path. Luckily, however, the rain held off, and in due time he arrived at the bungalow without a wetting.

Farnham greeted his guest with hospitable amiability.

"I was afraid the weather might scare you off," he said, smiling, "but I might have known better. How are you feeling, anyhow?"

The radiant face of the psychologist was of itself a sufficient answer. He spoke proudly:

"I'm feeling, since you ask me, er — sublime!"

Farnham's smile widened.

"Oho! You've plucked something again out of the ——"

Carney held up a restraining hand.

"Not out of the absolute this time — out of the sea. Knowledge flowed upon me, so to speak. It wet my feet." In answer to his friend's bewildered expression, he explained the idea that had come to him from the rising of the tide. The young man listened intently, nodding from time to time.

"You do beat the Dutch, Doctor," he exclaimed admiringly, as the other came to an end of the narrative. "Knowledge comes to you in mighty curious ways, but it comes — out of the squawking of parrots, out of a blood-stained book, out of the ocean. What next?"

"Next is to get Vera Daniloff's jewelry," was the sententious reply. "We mustn't lose a minute."

Farnham looked doubtful.

"It's not going to be a nice night for such an expedition," he protested. "Anyhow, I'm hungry

and it will be better if we eat first."

"I offer you my apologies," the Doctor said blandly, quite unabashed by his breach of etiquette, "but I've already eaten at the hotel. I had to — I was so hungry."

Farnham laughed.

"I don't blame you, and you are forgiven, provided you'll curb your impatience long enough for me to eat a bite myself."

"Fair enough," the psychologist agreed. He seated himself, and filled his pipe, which he smoked energetically while the architect made ready and hurriedly consumed a simple repast. The meal was not yet ended when there came a downpour of rain. Farnham regarded Carney inquiringly.

"You don't think it would be wiser to wait for the next tide?"

"No." A vigorous neadshake emphasized the negative. "There is always danger in delay, and — I don't trust that spy. He may have been watching us from some place with a telescope, may have seen me pacing, may have guessed something. If we waited, he might, as the saying is in the vernacular, beat us to it. Have you a raincoat?"

"No, but a wetting won't hurt me."

"A torch?"

"Yes."

"And have you a spade?"

"Yes." Farnham went out of the bungalow, and returned in a moment dripping, in his hand the spade.

Carney got up briskly, emptied his pipe, and returned it to a pocket of his inner coat

"Let's be off," he urged.

The two men buttoned their coats securely, turned up the collars, rolled up the legs of their trousers, and pulled their caps down firmly, for the bungalow was shaking under fierce assaults of the wind. Then, Carney leading and behind him Farnham carrying the spade, each with electric torch in hand, the pair sallied out into the rain-drenched blackness of the night. Carney shouted over his shoulder against the noise of wind and rain:

"Keep an eye out for the spy!"

"Right!" Farnham called in answer. And to himself he added: "I'm thinking, my only hope of clearing myself is in the capture of that fellow. Just finding the jewels, according to this crazy idea of the Doctor's, would probably be counted another bit of evidence against me. The police would be sure to think that I had got him down here and guided him to them — afraid, after all, to hang onto them myself, though I had killed a man to get possession of them. But if they prove a trap to catch the spy, I may have a chance to get out of the mess. Anyhow, he'd have a hard

job to explain what he's been up to down here."

The two men pushed forward rapidly, flashing their torches from time to time to make sure that a clear way lay before them. The rain continued to fall in torrents, and Farnham was quickly soaked to the skin. The night, however, remained sultry, in spite of the storm, and the quick pace maintained by Carney in the lead prevented the young man from becoming chilled. As for the psychologist himself, the light silk coat kept him snug and dry, and he went onward blithely, untroubled by the tempest that roared about him, his spirit exalted by expectation of the triumph presently to be achieved. He had no doubt now as to the issue, sure that he would find here and there on the salt meadow before the shack pools of water left by the outflowing tide, sure that he would find in one of these, somewhere along the circumference of a circle having a radius of one hundred and thirty-two yards from the point on the wall where the icon had hung, the treasure of gems belonging to Vera Daniloff and so cunningly hidden in this remote place by the old Russian sailor, her loyal servant. *"V' kupal'noo,"* the Doctor repeated, with some pride over his glibness with the Russian phrase. "Yes, I'll find them in a pool there—if not in one pool, then in another. Under the stimulus of the anticipation, he quickened his steps, already rapid, almost to a run.

But he checked himself suddenly at a sound out of the darkness behind him. He halted, turning, and peered back into the gloom shrouding the roadway. His eyes could distinguish nothing, and he sent the radiance of his torch over the way he had come. The light, however, showed only the bare track of rain-swept road. Farnham was not in sight. The Doctor realized that the burst of speed had outdistanced his companion, and he waited impatiently for his friend's appearance. The sound that had reached his ears through the din of the element was doubtless a hail, though, somehow, it had sounded more like a cry of distress, almost a groan. For an instant, there came into Carney's mind the thought of a possibility that the spy had again thrust himself into the affair, had, in fact, ventured an attack on Farnham, stealing to assault him under cover of the darkness and the uproar of the storm. A momentary alarm over the fancy seized Carney. His hand went to the automatic in his pocket, and the contact of the steel reassured him. He lifted his voice in a loud shrill call that sounded far. As he strained his ears to listen, a faint reply came. The word or words were unintelligible, but they relieved the listener of further apprehension. A moment later, the ray of his torch showed the figure of a man advancing rapidly toward him, and in the same second he was able to recognize

Farnham, spade on shoulder. The young man's voice sounded clearly as he came close.

"Walked into the ditch and lost a little time," he announced cheerfully, blinking his eyes as the brilliance of Carney's torch fell for an instant over his face. "But I'll keep up now. Lead on!"

Again, the two men went forward, the Doctor still in the lead. They reached the village street, and followed it to Waterfront, down which they turned on their way to the shore. Through this part of their journey, they had no need of the torches, since there was light enough from the arc lamps. Moreover, as they came to the land immediately bordering the Sound, and crossed the bridge over the inlet, they were still able to go safely without recourse to the torches, for now the storm was at its greatest violence, with incessant blazes of lightning, which bathed the scene in brilliant light. To the shrieking of the wind was added the frequent crashing of thunderbolts. The clamor of the elements was so great that there was no effort toward conversation as Carney slackened his pace a little and Farnham came alongside. The psychologist merely pointed toward the shack during an instant when it was clearly revealed by a flare from out the riven clouds, and the other nodded assent to the significance of the gesture. The two men went forward side by side, descending from the bridge

and turning to the right from the roadway to step out on the meadow. The ground here was soggy, not only from the rainfall, but also from the remnant of water that remained about the roots of the grass from the ebbing tide. It seemed to Carney that the time was indeed well chosen for his project. Now, if ever, any pools on the surface of the meadow would be at full. Exultation mounted high within him. He was all athrill with the spirit of adventure, which at last grew to a climax. The fierce strife of the storm did but serve to add excitement to his mood. A thought of the spy came to him, but he dismissed it with a smile of disdain. A possibility of peril in the undertaking failed even to interest him, so absorbed was he in this final testing of his hopes. He went directly to the closed door of the shack, and stood with his back against it, while his companion remained motionless, close at hand, watching attentively in silence. For a long moment, Carney rested without word or movement. It was as if he paused in concentration of purpose that was almost a prayer. Then, he beckoned toward the young man to follow him, and strode forward, measuring the way pace by pace, as he had measured it once before, stepping high and long, awkwardly. He looked an absurd figure, perhaps even a pathetic one, as he advanced thus stiffly, his short body held rigidly erect, his head bent forward a

little while he peered blinkingly through lenses blurred by raindrops. The companion close beside him, however, found nothing amusing in the bizarre spectacle presented by the searcher. On the contrary, Farnham's expression was as set and purposeful as that of the psychologist himself.

Carney continued his march steadily, muttering the count of paces beneath his breath. He slowed a little at the hundred and twenty-fifth pace, for just in front his eager stare detected a sheen of water with its surface unbroken by protruding blades of grass. He went forward three additional paces, then halted, looking down. His companion, too, came to a standstill, and peered intently. There could be no mistake as to the fact. A half-pace further onward lay a pool. It was evidently formed by a slight depression in the surface of the meadow, a circular hollow, some six feet in diameter and undoubtedly very shallow, with a greatest depth of hardly more than two feet. Carney was sure of this because he had come to this same spot when the meadow was drained dry, and he would have noted at that time the deeper depression. The play of lightning ceased abruptly, and an impenetrable darkness blotted out sight through a span of seconds. It was to the Doctor as if he had shut his eyes while he repeated solemnly in the manner of one chanting an invocation, though the words could not be

distinguished through the thunder peals, even by the man who leaned forward eagerly close at his shoulders:

"V' kupal'noo."

That was it. "Into the pool." At last, he was standing on the very brink of that pool for which he had been searching so earnestly. "Into the pool," the phrase once cried in Russian words by the bird now dumb, the third parrot. "Into the pool," the place indicated by those blood-marked words in the fourth verse of the fifth chapter of the Gospel according to John in Andrieff's *Book of the Gospels*. This was the spot, this the time. A tremor ran throughout Carney's tensed body. He slipped the torch into his pocket and turned his head, and cried loudly to his companion, in a voice that carried clearly above all the noises of the storm:

"Give me the spade."

The psychologist took the implement as the other obediently held it out to him, and at once waded out into the water. He halted in the middle of the pool, knee-deep. Forthwith, without hesitation, he began examination of the bottom by means of the spade, which he thrust downward vigorously, adding to the stroke by his weight with a foot set to the blade. The tool cut easily through the tangle of grass that overlay the bottom—too easily, since it encountered only the

soft soil. The Doctor completed the jabbing exploration over the central portion of the bottom without discovering any trace of the thing for which he sought. He advanced a little farther, and resumed thrusting the spade in the same orderly fashion as before. It was at the third thrust of his foot against the heel of the blade that it encountered a new resistance. He applied his weight fully, but the spade would penetrate no farther. It was as if it had encountered a rock, but there had been no sound of such contact. The Doctor had no doubt that the obstacle thus encountered was in very truth a wooden box — receptacle for the jewels of Vera Daniloff. A sigh of perfect gratification issued from his lips. He redoubled his efforts with the spade, endeavoring to guide his strokes about the box in such fashion as to loosen it. Soon, he was able to make sure of an oblong shape, perhaps a foot in length by half that breadth and thickness. It resisted his efforts for a time, but presently, as he bent and pushed the spade underneath an edge, the box loosened and lifted. Another shove, and it was free, lying on the bottom of the pool. Carney tossed the spade from him to fall on the grass at Farnham's feet. Then, stooping low, without care for the water that flowed within the openings of his raincoat, the psychologist thrust his arms into the pool to the shoulders, seized on the box,

and lifted it, and held it clasped closely to his breast. The joy of victory pulsed in his blood as he turned and waded out of the pool. His eyes were fastened gloatingly on the little box, which he bore snuggled within his arms. It was as if he caressed this tangible proof, this monument to his achievement. He did not see the sudden swift and silent movement of the other man, did not see the spade swung aloft, then down. The blade of the shovel struck squarely on his head, and he went down to unconsciousness like a polled ox.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE FIGHT IN THE STORM

IT WAS fortunate for the psychologist that the blow was made by the flat of the shovel, rather than by the edge. The result was that he escaped a serious wound, though momentarily stunned. He was unconscious as he sprawled to the ground, and the precious box fell from his relaxed arms, to lie on the grass beside him. Yet, the failure of consciousness was only of a most transitory sort. A flicker of returning intelligence came in almost the same second, so that, dazedly, his eyes noted the box on the ground just before his eyes, noted, too, that it was swiftly seized by two hands and lifted out of his sight. Then, again, everything was black for a little, though the lightning still flared incessantly. But the interval was very brief; it was a matter merely of seconds before vision and thought were restored.

By a tremendous effort, Carney lifted his head slightly, and gazed about him. The thick lenses remained in position before his eyes, so that he was able to see distinctly enough, notwithstanding the fact that the confusion of his mind made it difficult to interpret the scene intelligently. Pres-

ently, however, his brain functioned accurately, and he became aware that Farnham was just moving off, without a backward glance. The box, too, was visible, tucked under the man's left arm. The psychologist noted also, without interest, that the spade had been cast aside; it was lying on the ground immediately in front of him. Rage flooded Carney as full understanding came to him concerning the monstrous thing that had occurred. The event was incredible; nevertheless, it was true. In this moment of realization, the psychologist was compelled to readjust violently all his previous ideas as to the young man whom he had esteemed and befriended, whom he had trusted implicitly. There was no room for doubt. Farnham, his companion in this adventure, had without warning struck him down, the fellow was even now treacherously making off with the recovered jewels of Vera Daniloff. The act was dastardly. It offered substantial proof that the architect was a criminal, that the police were justified in charging him with the murder of Andrieff. It was obvious that he had slain the old sailor in order to gain possession of the gems; that, then, having failed to find the jewels, he had cunningly played the hypocrite, so that his dupe should lead him to the hiding place. His fury over being thus cozened served as a stimulant to the Doctor's strength. He struggled up until he was crouched on all fours. The effort

made him dizzy, and he was obliged to wait impatiently for the dizziness to pass. At last, he exerted himself again, and managed somehow to get on his feet and to stand swaying drunkenly. His rage quickened as he saw Farnham at some distance, hurrying across the meadow toward the roadway. Fear lest the fellow escape spurred him to action. A new strength flowed into him to serve his necessity. Instinctively, he stooped and picked up the spade, with a vague idea that he in turn might use it as a weapon. But the thought recalled to mind the automatic in his coat pocket. He swung the spade over his left shoulder, while his right hand slipped into the pocket of his coat, and drew out the pistol. Then he went shambling unsteadily across the meadow in the wake of his enemy.

Now, the lightning lessened by degrees. The intervals of darkness between the flashes were more frequent, of longer duration. Hardly had the psychologist begun his pursuit when the electric flames died, and blackness fell. Carney halted involuntarily, and stood peering futilely before him, awaiting a renewal of the lightning. It came quickly, and he saw Farnham already close to the road. At sight of his quarry there, the Doctor set forward again, running more nimbly. Darkness came a second time, but he kept on without lessening his speed. The fellow must not escape!

A little more, and he floundered to his knees, letting go the spade in his fall. He had reached the slight embankment that raised the roadway above the encroachment of the tide. The fall had done no more than jar him. He groped for the spade, found it, and scrambled to his feet. A brilliant flash lighted the scene. What he saw held the psychologist motionless at the roadside.

The bridge over the inlet was no more than fifty yards distant from where Carney stood. On it showed the figure of a man running. The vividness of the light allowed a clear view, and Carney gaped in amazement as he looked. He recognized Farnham in this man advancing swiftly over the bridge toward him. He could not be mistaken in face and figure of this one whom he had so recently counted as friend. Yet, how could the fellow have come there within that fleeting period of darkness and why was he returning in such haste? And, too, there was now a great smear of blood over the right temple and cheek. Carney marveled the more, for he could swear that Farnham's face, as he had seen it when he lay crumpled on the grass, had shown no trace of injury. How had the wound chanced within those mysterious seconds of darkness? The medley of thoughts whirled through the Doctor's brain in a twinkling. They whirled anew, more maddeningly, as he blinked, then shifted his gaze to take in an object

closer at hand, which somehow seemed to demand his attention. He saw, on the opposite side of the roadway the form of a man, standing motionless, hardly a rod beyond him. The face of the man was turned toward the bridge and the runner. The lightning continued, and the countenance was clearly revealed to the psychologist. The little man crouched instinctively within the shelter of the embankment, and stared before him in a dismay of pitiful bewilderment. He was near to whimpering as he asked himself if he were indeed going mad. For the man here at hand was Farnham. He could not doubt the evidence of his eyes. And that other man there, coming closer so swiftly, that, too, was Farnham. There could be no doubt as to the fellow's identity. There could be no doubt as to the identity of either. The psychologist groaned helplessly. He must, in very truth, be crazed. There were two of Farnham, two present before his eyes, face to face, about to meet. Carney shook his head as if to clear one or the other of the men from his vision. He felt that the blow of the spade had somehow jumbled his wits, had left him insane. He was in a stupor of astonishment that held him paralyzed. For the moment, he had no further thought of vengeance against his assailant, although the fellow stood there almost within reach, with the box of gems under his arm. But was it?

The Doctor looked closely, and his confusion increased as he saw that the box had vanished. His gaze went to the other Farnham. There was no box under either arm of the runner.

For a few seconds, the scene held thus. Then, there came a movement of the right hand by the man near Carney. A report sounded. The runner swerved, and leaped to the grass of the meadow. He was on the side of the roadway opposite that of the other man, and so sheltered from another shot, although still visible as he crouched down to Carney. The lightning died out, and, when he looked again at the road as another flash came, the Doctor saw that the other Farnham had vanished. He guessed that the fellow also, in his turn, was crouching behind the embankment on the opposite side of the road. The black came again, and a stab of fire darted over the road, followed by a report. It was a return shot from the man on Carney's side of the road. The Doctor broke his habit of a lifetime and cursed softly to himself. There were two Farnhams, and they were deadly foes, and they were fighting a duel in the dark and the storm. And he himself was hopelessly mad.

Carney's rage over the attack on him and the theft of the jewels was by no means lessened, but it was held in check for the moment by the amazing situation that had developed. His dominant

emotion now was of wonder, of curiosity as to the significance of this mysterious doubling of identities by the two men battling yonder, if they were not indeed delusions of his own overwrought brain. It did not occur to him to take an active part in the conflict; he was sufficiently absorbed in the passive role of spectator. He fretted against the brief periods when the lightning failed and darkness shut out all the scene from his sight, save as a leaping flame of fire from an automatic signaled the strife. The jets of fire showed now here, now there, along the roadway. It was evident that the combatants were dodging back and forth on either side of the roadway as a rampart, in the hope thus by quick changes of position to baffle any attempt at accurate aim. Then, at last, the blackness vanished before a dazzling burst of radiance from the canopy of clouds. The Doctor saw the man from the near side of the road straighten and leap up the embankment, to cross the highway, and disappear beyond it. A shot sounded, followed by a dull thud. The psychologist guessed that the sound was made by the impact of a fallen body on the earth of the meadow, that the two men had come to gripes. He fancied that he could hear the panting breath of the fighters as they strained together in a desperate clutch. Curiosity could not be denied. Carney advanced cautiously along the road toward the

point where the two men were hidden. The lightning faded out, but he went onward intrepidly, driven by the violence of his longing to understand this latest and most astounding puzzle. A stray bullet might reach him, but he gave no heed to the risk. He no longer could endure the suspense of this strange conflict, this weird struggle between two enemies who seemed to possess but a single identity between them. So, in a matter of seconds, he reached a point immediately above the place where the fight was being carried on. Carney halted, striving in vain to penetrate the murk with eagerly peering eyes, and listening. It required no help of the imagination now to hear the gasps and grunts of the two straining so fiercely. The heavens burned again, and Carney saw plainly the two forms closely intertwined in convulsive grapple. The light was full now, and revealed every detail plainly. The psychologist could not see the face of the man who was uppermost, nor had he eyes for it. His whole attention was concentrated on the countenance of the man who lay underneath. That visage was frightfully distorted by spasms of hate and terror, as the man struggled frenziedly, but without avail, to free himself from his enemy's clutch. Carney stared down at the contorted face in horror, and in an amazement beyond anything in his experience hitherto. For he recognized the face of the man writhing

there so frantically; he recognized it with a feeling akin to terror over the mystery of its presence there, with loathing over its evil reality. It was no longer the face of Farnham. It was the face of the man to whom his attention had once been attracted in the elevated train, the face of that man whom he had believed to be a murderer. Now, staring down at those twisted features with the rolling, blazing eyes, that expression of mingled ferocity and fear, made more ghastly by the blue quivering glare of the lightning, Carney believed again, with absolute conviction. He knew that here at last he had found the assassin of Andrieff.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE ARM OF THE LAW

THE SHOCK of his discovery held Doctor Carney rigid and motionless for a full minute, while the combatants maintained their straining embrace through alternate light and darkness as the lightning played. Presently, however, he shook off the lethargy, and, as a brilliant flare came, he plunged down the embankment with a shrill cry of triumph. He leaped alongside the fighting men, fell to his knees, and clutched with both hands at the flailing right arm of the man underneath. He gripped it firmly, and with his weight upon it managed to hold it fast, outstretched on the ground. Mechanically, his consciousness registered the thought that the other man must be the true Farnham. But he did not seek to verify the idea: his sole concern was to help in the mastering of the assassin, to make sure of the fellow's capture. The muscles of the arm he held swelled in repeated efforts to win free, and the little man had much ado to retain his grasp, but he hung on doggedly with indomitable purpose that his prisoner should not escape. Throughout, his gaze went unwaveringly to the

convulsed face that he had recognized. Even in the intervals of darkness, it seemed to him that he still saw it with horrible distinctness.

In a lull of the storm, which was now lessening, there sounded the noise of running feet as someone crossed the bridge over the inlet. The psychologist gave no heed. But, a moment later, he was startled into attention when a sudden blinding light, white and unflickering, picked out the struggling group. Carney realized that this radiance was unlike the glare from the storm. He turned his head for a glance over his shoulder, and looked into the dazzling ray of an electric torch held by some one standing invisible on the edge of the embankment. A gruff voice called out sharply:

"Get him, boys—he's underneath. Never mind the little man. Pull Farnham off."

The light of the torch was held in position steadily while these orders were obeyed. Carney, though he endeavored to retain his grip on the arm, was ruthlessly brushed aside as two stalwart forms closed in on the struggling trio. As he got to his feet, fairly snarling in his wrath, he heard a click, which he knew instinctively to be the snapping of a handcuff. He looked, and perceived that the man he desired was indeed a prisoner; now safely manacled in charge of a burly guard. Another stalwart individual had seized the uppermost of the two fighting men, whom he yanked

upright, and then restrained from a renewed attack. The prisoner, too, got to his feet, roughly assisted by his guard. The man in the road holding the torch snapped another command:

"Frisk 'em. Never mind the Doctor."

A touch of mortification over being thus contemptuously ignored was forgotten by the psychologist as he recognized the voice. It was that of Maxwell. Carney rejoiced in the timely presence of the competent official and friend—a presence totally unlooked for, almost as astonishing as the other events of the night. The Doctor scrambled up the embankment, stammering excitedly as he went:

"It's the man of the elevated train—the murderer, Andrieff's assassin."

"Maybe it is," Maxwell replied coolly. "Anyhow, whoever he is and whatever he's done, I've got him."

There was further talk, in which Farnham joined, but the prisoner maintained a sullen silence. The architect explained briefly that soon after the departure from the bungalow, he had been struck down by a heavy blow on the head. He had remained unconscious for a time, but had finally regained his senses, and his first clear thought had been of danger to Carney, for he believed that the attack on him had been made by the unknown spy. He had, therefore, gone

on as quickly as he could, and had just reached the bridge when he saw in a flash of the lightning the Doctor struck down at the edge of the pool. Then he had run forward to attack in his turn.

Understanding came to Carney. He spoke slowly, considering carefully:

"So, it seems that this murderer fooled me completely. He knocked out Farnham, and then took Farnham's place, and came on down here with me, and I never knew the difference. I just led him straight to what he wanted, to what he couldn't find for himself. Afterward, he only had to hit me over the head with the spade, and make off. His one mistake was he didn't strike Farnham quite hard enough."

"Oh, we'd have nabbed him anyhow," Maxwell interrupted complacently.

"To think," the Doctor continued musingly, "that I never even suspected the fellow wasn't Farnham! Why, I saw him face to face by the lightning, and I never guessed the fraud. I even recognized his voice. Let's have a look at him."

The rain had ceased now, and glimpses of clear sky showed between the clouds, but the gloom of the night was deep. Maxwell obediently turned the light of his torch on the prisoner, who faced it unflinchingly, his expression stolid.

"No wonder he fooled me," the psychologist muttered, dumfounded. For, once again, it

seemed to him that he was looking into the face of Farnham. The likeness to the man on the elevated train had been blotted out in the present quietude of the expression. It was only under the torment of emotion that the assassin revealed himself.

"It's a good makeup," Maxwell admitted. "Besides, he's had practice. He rigged himself up to look like Farnham the day he went to kill Andrieff. He was the one the woman saw in the upper hall of the house, and he's the one that spoke to Miss Daniloff at the entrance, and told her to go back home, that Andrieff wasn't in his room upstairs. The old fellow wasn't, but his dead body was. Yes, this chap is a good actor. He's a bad actor, too." Maxwell chuckled over his little jest with the slang phrase.

Both Carney and Farnham were amazed by this revelation, so casually uttered by the deputy commissioner.

"But who is he?" the Doctor demanded, still at a loss to understand fully.

"You'll know him fast enough," Maxwell declared, "when his ears stick out again, and the stuffing is taken from inside his cheeks, and his face is cleaned to show his own dark skin and when he's in clothes that are not a copy of Farnham's, and when he uses his natural voice."

Farnham was shrewder in penetrating the dis-

guise. Looking at the man, he spoke abruptly:

"It's Boris Goshkoff."

The Doctor uttered an exclamation of wonder as conviction of the truth came to him.

"Why did he do it?" Farnham questioned. Curiosity almost overcame anger at the deception of which he had been the victim.

"He had two reasons," Maxwell explained. "In the first place, he planned to divert all suspicion of the murder from him to you, and, in the second place, thus incidentally to get you out of the way, for he feared you as a rival in the affections of Miss Daniloff."

Farnham's face whitened with rage, but by a stern effort of will he remained motionless and silent, though his impulse, like a flame, was to hurl himself again on the man who had so wantonly plotted this outrage against him — and her. For distraction, rather than from any care as to his appearance, he stepped aside to the shallows of the inlet, and there with his handkerchief dipped in the water made shift to cleanse his face of the dried blood that had trickled down from the slight abrasion of his scalp. By the time he returned to the group in the road, he had regained his poise, at least outwardly.

"Now, boys, let's get back to the village with him," Maxwell directed his aides. The scattering clouds had opened, and the moonlight showed the

way clearly enough. The two guards advanced toward the bridge obediently, with their passive prisoner between them. Maxwell and Farnham followed side by side. "But where's Carney?" the deputy commissioner demanded suddenly.

"Right here," the Doctor's voice answered from a little way in the rear. He had slipped back along the road a few moments earlier, and as he drew up to the others, he was fumbling with a hand inside the breast of his raincoat. But he vouchsafed no explanation. In front of the hotel, the party halted, and Maxwell issued his instructions as to the disposal of the prisoner for the night in the village-lockup.

"Of course," Maxwell said, grinning, "I have no authority in this state, but there will be no trouble about that, and I have an idea that Goshkoff will waive extradition. How about it?"

The Russian spoke for the first time:

"Yes. I have powerful friends in New York."

"You'll need all of 'em," was the grim retort, "to keep you out of the chair. Off with him!" he added to his subordinates. Then, accompanied by Farnham and Carney, he turned to enter the hotel.

At the same moment, the door was swung violently open from within. There came a swirl of garments, a burst of soft staccato tones, and Vera Daniloff was lying on Farnham's breast, her

arms clasped closely about his neck, her lips raised expectantly for the kiss, which was not delayed. The young man's astonishment was as nothing to his ardor as a lover. He held her in a firm embrace that thrilled them both to rapture. But the Doctor's eyes were goggling as he beheld the advent of the girl. It was the capping of the climax among the miracles of this night. Presently, however, Vera drew away, and, blushing in a pretty confusion, greeted the psychologist, and kissed his cheek.

"I have prepared a feast," she said to the three of them. "I was listening at the door before I came out. I know you have him. It is well. And I have arranged with the hotel-keeper for a little supper by ourselves in the dining-room — a lawful beer, and the national dish, you know."

"She would come along with me," Maxwell explained with a benignant smile. "But what is this national dish?"

"Those hot dogs, the food of your red men," the girl explained serenely. "Come." She led the way into the hotel and on into the dining-room, where a table was already prepared for them.

There was, in truth, little feasting but much by way of explanation. It was evident from the outset that the lovers had plighted troth without a word being spoken. There was no need of explanation between these two. But there were

other things less easily understood. Maxwell cleared up the mystery of his own appearance on the scene. His men in New York had arrested an intimate associate of Goshkoff, who had not hesitated to incriminate the actor in order to gain favor for himself. From this source, it was learned that Goshkoff had for some time been on the track of Andrieff and the jewels. Then, Vera Daniloff had gone to the deputy commissioner in a desperate effort to relieve her lover from a suspicion that she believed to be unjust. Goshkoff's statements to her had roused in her an instinctive belief in his guilt, and she strove to impress this same conviction on the police official. Maxwell, through his detectives, already knew of the architect's retreat to Clinton, and he was equally well informed when both Carney and Goshkoff betook themselves to the same neighborhood. He had, in consequence, acceded to Vera's desire that he should act at once, and the two of them, accompanied by a pair of detectives, had journeyed to the village that day, arriving in the early evening. With his two men, he had set out through the storm in quest of the absent Doctor. The three had heard shots from the direction of the shore and had hurried to investigate.

"The rest you know," Maxwell concluded. "Now, suppose you tell me just what occurred down there." His request was made to Carney,

since the lovers had little attention for aught save each other.

The psychologist tersely narrated his part in the events of the night. As he made an end, Maxwell pursed his lips and whistled.

"You really found that jewelry," he exclaimed at last, staring at the little man in frank admiration. "Now, doesn't that beat the devil!"

"It certainly does," the Doctor agreed, with great cheerfulness. "But the devil beat me first over the head with a shovel, and almost got away with it."

"So," continued Maxwell musingly, "that loot was what you chased down here after. I supposed all the time that Goshkoff had it. What made you suspect anything different, Doctor?"

It was then that Carney related pridefully the whole story of what he had gathered from the parrots and from Andrieff's *Book of the Gospels,* which had led at last to the finding of the treasure in the pool on the salt meadow. And throughout the narrative, the police official listened with flattering attention.

"Now, just think of that!" he exclaimed when the psychologist paused. "I heard those birds yelling their fool heads off, and all I got from it was an ear ache. Well, well! I've been looking after this case so as to save you from being bothered too much, Doctor, and I sure have my re-

ward. We'd never have got either the murderer or the jewelry, I'm thinking, if it hadn't been for your butting in. I don't know how you do it, but you're a corker!

"But where in thunder is that jewelry?" Maxwell added abruptly. "Somewhere down on the shore, lost during the scrap. We must get busy and find it."

"No," the Doctor asserted, and his voice had a tone of distinct triumph. "I went back for it." He reached under his raincoat, which he had adjusted carefully on a chair close by, and brought forth the box. Maxwell cleared a space in the center of the table, and there the Doctor placed the plain wooden box, still soaked from the waves of the sea and the rain, and still with fragments of earth clinging to it here and there. The attention of the lovers had been at last arrested, and they stared, fascinated.

The Russian girl in thus accompanying Maxwell had been influenced only by anxiety in her lover's behalf; she had had no thought as to a possible recovery of her fortune. She had listened astounded to the tale so glibly related by the little Doctor, and she was now brimming with delight over the restoration of her heritage. Yet, her feeling in this matter was less by far than it must have been had it not been for that greater gladness just attained by love's triumph.

Farnham, too, was pleasurably excited.

"Good heavens," he exclaimed. "It's the treasure! I'd forgotten all about it."

"Natural enough," was Maxwell's comment. "You had plenty to keep your interest, what with fighting Goshkoff, and getting suddenly acquitted of a murder charge—not to mention Miss Daniloff here." He smiled sympathetically.

"It is your right to open it," Carney said, turning to Vera with a benignant expression. "I am the fairy godfather, though I may not look it, and I bring your marriage portion to the betrothal feast." He had no doubt as to the contents of the box although another might have reflected that his find might be no more than some worthless thing cast away and forgotten. "Now!" he commanded.

The girl, her eyes sparkling, leaned forward obediently, and the beautiful fingers pushed free the hook that served as a fastening. She raised the lid, and took out a large packet in a cover of oiled silk, about which a cord had been elaborately knotted. Maxwell proffered a knife, and she severed the strings. The folds of cloth were spread out. Then, of a sudden, there was revealed the actuality of the treasure itself. It was already familiar to the owner of it, but the three men gazed in a curiosity tinged with awe at sight of such magnificence. For the house of Daniloff was

ancient, and the men of the race had loved rich jewels, had sought them eagerly, had purchased them prodigally. The result was here in this great heap of gems in settings of gold. The glittering store, splendid under the electric light, showed the flashing prismed beauty of diamonds, the still green radiance of emeralds, the blue black of sapphires, the changing flames of opals, the soft shimmer of pearls from the depths of oriental seas, the vivid loveliness of rubies red as blood freshly flowing, the lusters of other stones hardly less precious, equally beautiful. It was Vera who broke the silence, raising her eyes from a priceless bracelet set all about with those rubies red as blood.

"It was for these that he killed, that he dipped his hands in blood." The softly spoken words were tremulous at thought of the crime of Boris Goshkoff.

"It is a noble dowry," the Doctor declared, and his tone was reverent. He enjoyed a new sense of his own importance as he contemplated the riches spread before him, for he realized that the recovery of them had been his achievement.

"You sure did deliver the goods," Maxwell made compliment.

Vera took the words literally, and amended them.

"Yes, and he delivered the bad as well, since

that dreadful person is now in jail."

The voice of the hotel-keeper interrupted them. The man was standing at a little distance, his eyes popping as he regarded the heaped mass of gold and gems.

"The management is not responsible," he warned, "for gewgaws and dewdabs left lying around promiscuous."

"We'll do them up, and seal them, and have you put them in your safe for the night," Maxwell promised, with a glance toward the girl, who nodded assent. "But I do like to look at them," he added a little sheepishly, as the wondering landlord withdrew from the room. He beamed on Carney. "You certainly did some mighty fine work in deduction, Doctor."

The psychologist shook his head doubtfully.

"I intend," he explained, his manner becoming didactic, "to devote myself for some time to a study of my own mental processes in this case. Did I get my ideas by reasoning from observed facts, or did those ideas just come to me? The difficulty is in telling the source. Did my trained mind reason so swiftly that I was unaware of the action save in the resulting thought? Did I then afterward repeat slowly and laboriously and consciously that same reasoning which had already produced the thought I was seeking to justify by logic? Or did the ideas come from intangible

sources? It may be that I have developed a psychic sensitiveness. In my next book, I shall go into the whole matter with thoroughness."

Maxwell, who did not in the least understand what the Doctor was talking about, nodded heavily.

"Anyhow, you're a wonder!" He spoke with finality, and both Vera Daniloff and Farnham applauded the sentiment.

The girl was radiant again, dimpling and smiling. She made a gesture toward her lover, from whose face happiness had wiped out the lines of suffering.

"I am so grateful to you, dear Doctor," she said, "for giving Edward my message. He has not reproached me because I failed to trust him just at first."

"Your message?" the psychologist repeated, puzzled.

"Yes. You told him when you came here just as I had asked you to that I was so anxious about him, that I should worry constantly until his return to me. Because you told him that, Edward knew that I did trust him and believe in him after all."

"I did indeed," Farnham agreed, but his eyes were turned accusingly on Carney, who avoided the gaze.

"I can explain it to him afterward," the psy-

chologist reflected, "if only he keeps quiet now." He was conscience-stricken over the error by which he had misjudged the girl. "She did say, 'I should worry'—just like that—and, for once, it wasn't slang. The dear child really meant it."

Then, to divert attention toward a safer topic, the psychologist made an announcement, apropos of nothing at all:

"As soon as I get back to the city, I must visit my physician."

"Nonsense!" Farnham exclaimed while Maxwell, too, snorted indignantly. "Why you're the picture of health, Doctor. You're a new man from what you were the first time I saw you."

"That's it exactly," Carney agreed. "I never was so well in my life. But that time when I met you and Vera in Andrieff's room, I had just come from my physician. I went to him because I was a sick man, all out of kilter. He prescribed for me. I have done exactly what he told me not to do. I am in perfect health from not following his advice. I wish to exhibit myself to him, to tell him the facts, and—er—rub it in, you know." He smiled whimsically, and the others smiled with him.

"I have a happy thought," Vera exclaimed presently. "I shall reward you by a gift." The eyes of the psychologist went to the treasure on the table, and he shook his head. He could ac-

cept no reward for service that had been only a delight.

"But you must," the girl persisted. "I shall give you the three parrots that taught you so wonderfully the secret of the mystery."

But Carney shook his head more violently than before, and now he voiced his objection bluntly:

"The voices of parrots have always been offensive to me. I should go mad with those two creatures squawking in my ears."

Vera's face fell, then brightened again.

"But the third parrot — it is dumb."

It was true. That third parrot could never torture his ears by strident croakings. And, in truth, that unfortunate bird had been the beginning and the ending of the mystery. The sight of it there on the window-ledge had first guided him to the place of crime. Its unuttered phrase, interpreted by the blood-marked words in Andrieff's *Book of the Gospels,* had led him this very night into that pool of water on the salt meadow wherein he had retrieved the treasure now at last safely set before the owner of it.

"*V' kupal'noo,*" he murmured to himself, "into the pool.

"I thank you, Miss Daniloff," he said aloud a moment later, and his manner carried a touch of formality. "I should like to keep for my own Andrieff's *Book of the Gospels,* which to me was

as the voice of the dumb, and I shall be very glad to accept your gift, to have for my very own, the third parrot."

AUG 6 1924

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